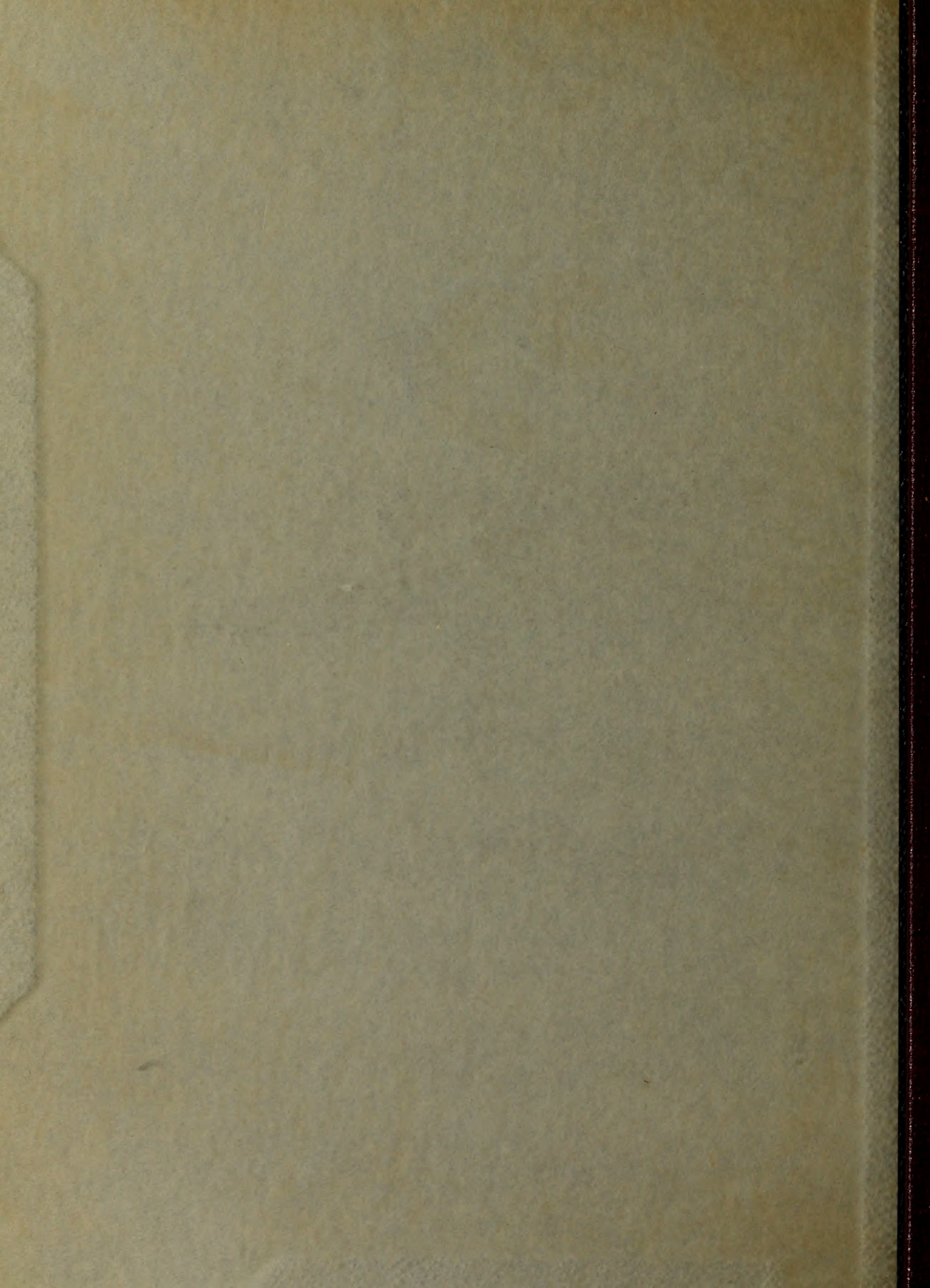


AM
1936
to



BOSTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis
THE CONCEPTION OF JESUS IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

by

Louise Trask Torrance

(A.B. New York State College for Teachers, 1930)

submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
1936

1936
to

-Table of Contents-

Chapter One

<u>The Author and His Work</u> - - - - -	1
------------------------------------------	---

Chapter Two

<u>The Author's Presentation of Jesus</u> - - - - -	7
Jesus in Terms of the Priesthood - - - - -	8
Eligibility 'after the order of Melchizedek' - - -	15

Chapter Three

<u>The High Priesthood of Jesus</u> - - - - -	19
The Qualifications for Priesthood - - - - -	19
Training for the Priestly Office - - - - -	23

Chapter Four

<u>The Superiority of Jesus as High Priest</u> - - - - -	28
By Reason of His Person - - - - -	29
1. The Pre-existent Son - - - - -	29
2. The Incarnate Son - - - - -	30
3. The Exalted Son - - - - -	36
By Reason of His Superiority over the Prophets - -	40
By Reason of His Superiority over the Angels - - -	41
By Reason of His Superiority over Moses and Joshua - - - - -	44
By Reason of His Superiority over the Aaronic Priests - - - - -	46
1. In Ministry of a Better Covenant - - - - -	48
2. In Ministry of a Better Sanctuary - - - - -	50
3. In Ministry of a Better Sacrifice - - - - -	53

Chapter Five

<u>Conclusion</u> - - - - -	60
-----------------------------	----

Chapter Six

<u>Summary</u> - - - - -	61
Chapter One - - - - -	61
Chapter Two - - - - -	62
Chapter Three - - - - -	63
Chapter Four - - - - -	64
General Summary - - - - -	68

Bibliography

- - - - -	69
-----------	----

-Table of Contents-

1	Chapter One	The Author and His Work
7	Chapter Two	The Author's Presentation of Jesus
8		Jesus in Terms of the Kingdom
12		Elitism, 'either the order of the world'
13	Chapter Three	The High Priesthood of Jesus
13		The Qualifications for Priesthood
23		Training for the Priestly Office
23	Chapter Four	The Supremacy of Jesus as High Priest
23		By Reason of His Person
23		1. The Pre-existent Son
23		2. The Incarnate Son
23		3. The Exalted Son
40		By Reason of His Superiority over the Prophets
41		By Reason of His Superiority over the Apostles
44		By Reason of His Superiority over the Angels
50	Chapter Five	Conclusion
61	Chapter Six	Summary
61		Chapter One
62		Chapter Two
63		Chapter Three
64		Chapter Four
68		General Summary
69		Bibliography

Chapter I

The Author and His Work

Since in this study we are to analyze the author's conception of Jesus, it might be well first to infer what we can about the author, and to consider the influences which caused the formation of his ideas, promulgated in the Epistle.

It is by conjecture only that we can know our author for he has neglected to make himself known to us. The author of Hebrews is considered, with Luke, the most cultured of the early Christian writers. The Greek of the Epistle is classical in quality; the sentences are well constructed and the arrangement of the Epistle is carefully worked out so that we conclude the work is from a man of ability with philosophical knowledge. The writer has the tone of authority and seems to be well known to his readers. We know the author has received second handed the gospel which had "at first been spoken through the Lord was confirmed unto us by them that heard."² He has evidently been converted by evangelization. Our author refers to Timothy- "Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty."³ From this we believe our author to be a member of the Pauline circle.

At one time Paul was considered the author. We find that the early "Roman Church where the first traces of the epistle occur, about A.D. 96 (I Clement), had nothing to contribute to the question of authorship of the Epistle except the negative

2. Hebrews 2:3.
3. Hebrews 12:23.

Chapter I

The Author and His Work

Since in this study we are to analyze the author's conception of Jesus, it might be well first to infer what we can about the author, and to consider the influences which caused the formation of his ideas, promulgated in the Epistle.

It is by conjecture only that we can know our author for he has neglected to make himself known to us. The author of

Hebrews is considered, with Luke, the most cultured of the early Christian writers. The Greek of the Epistle is classical in quality; the sentences are well constructed and the arrangement of the Epistle is carefully worked out so that we conclude the work is from a man of ability with philosophical knowledge. The writer has the tone of authority and seems to be well known to his readers. We know the author has received second hand the Gospel which had "at first been spoken through the Lord was confirmed unto us by them that heard."² He has evidently been

converted by evangelization. Our author refers to Timothy-

"Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty."³ From

this we believe our author to be a member of the Pauline circle.

At one time Paul was considered the author, we find that

the early "Roman Church where the first traces of the Epistle occur, about A.D. 96 (I Clement), had nothing to contribute to the question of authorship of the Epistle except the negative

2. Hebrews 2:3.
3. Hebrews 12:22.

opinion that it was not by Paul."⁴ It was Jerome and Augustine who put the Epistle back on the list of Paul's writings. From the fifth to the sixteenth centuries it was generally considered to be St. Paul's. The sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries saw the Pauline authorship questioned in spite of the Authorized Version's title "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews." The eighteenth century saw fewer and fewer believers in the Pauline hypothesis. The favor of this has declined and now the hypothesis of Pauline authorship has given way to an unknown Jewish Alexandrian, being upheld by such outstanding students as Holtzmann, Julicher, Rendall, W. R. Smith, Westcott, Vaughan. As candidates for the honor of authorship we have a great number besides Paul. Luke, Barnabas, Apollos, Priscilla and Aquila, Clement of Rome, are some of the outstanding names given to it through the ages. The remark of Origen preserved for us by Eusebius is pertinent even today, "Who wrote the Epistle God only knows certainly."⁵

The destination of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which involves the question of the readers, has been disputed as much as the authorship. It seems that this too is as unanswerable as the question of authorship. But it is possible from internal evidences and history of the last half of the first century, to determine some of the conditions influencing our author

4. The Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XIII, p. 189.

5. Narborough, F.D.V., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 10.

opinion that it was not by Paul.⁴ It was Jerome and Augustine who put the Epistle back on the list of Paul's writings. From the fifth to the sixteenth centuries it was generally considered to be St. Paul's. The sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries saw the Pauline authorship questioned in spite of the Authorized Version's title "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews." The eighteenth century saw fewer and fewer believers in the Pauline hypothesis. The favor of this has declined and now the hypothesis of Pauline authorship has given way to an unknown Jewish Alexandrian, being upheld by such outstanding students as Holtzmann, Julicher, Rendall, W. R. Smith, Westcott, Vaughan. As candidates for the honor of authorship we have a great number besides Paul. Luke, Barnabas, Apollon, Priscilla and Aquila, Clement of Rome, are some of the outstanding names given to it through the ages. The remark of Origen preserved for us by Eusebius is pertinent even today, "Who wrote the Epistle God only knows certainly."⁵ The destination of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which involves the question of the readers, has been disputed as much as the authorship. It seems that this too is an unanswerable as the question of authorship. But it is possible from internal evidences and history of the last half of the first century, to determine some of the conditions influencing our author.

4. The Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. XIII, p. 189.
5. Harpocration, p. 10, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 10.

and his Epistle. There existed a group, who could not determine the position of the new faith to the old. There is some discussion among scholars whether this group consisted of the Hebrews generally; of all wavering believers; of members of a definite community who were "in^{the} same general circumstances of age, position and opinions"⁶ or of a group of Gentiles as Julicher, von Soden and McGiffert believed to be the case. There is every evidence that the author wrote to a certain group at a definite destination, and very probably "men of Hebrew race and upbringing who had been converted from Judaism to Christianity but who required further instruction in the true character of their new faith."⁷ Bruce says that the author of the Epistle "expresses himself with a fervour and urgency that forcibly suggest a circle of readers whose spiritual needs are known and lie as a burden on his heart."⁸ The readers of the letter had accepted Jesus Christ but were unaware of what their confession really meant. Moffatt gives us some idea of the situation by his summary: "The Christians to whom it was addressed had been evangelized by disciples of Jesus (told us in Heb. 2:3) and had passed through severe suffering on account of their faith shortly afterwards. A considerable time had elapsed since then, during which the early leaders of the church had died. This internal trial, together

6. Milligan, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 35.

7. Ibid, p. 41.

8. Bruce, A. B., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 2.

and his Epistle. There existed a group, who could not deter-
 mine the position of the new faith to the old. There is some
 discussion among scholars whether this group consisted of the
 Hebrews generally; of all wavering believers; of members of a
 definite community who were "in some general circumstances of
 age, position and opinions" or of a group of Gentiles as
 Julius, von Soden and McGiffert believed to be the case.
 There is every evidence that the author wrote to a certain
 group at a definite location, and very probably "men of
 Hebrew race and upbringing who had been converted from Judaism
 to Christianity but who required further instruction in the
 true character of their new faith." Bruce says that the
 author of the Epistle "expresses himself with a fervour and
 urgency that forcibly suggests a circle of readers whose
 spiritual needs are known and lie as a burden on his heart."
 The readers of the letter had accepted Jesus Christ but were
 unaware of what their conversion really meant. Moffatt gives
 us some idea of the situation by his summary: "The Christians
 to whom it was addressed had been evangelized by disciples of
 Jesus (fold as in Heb. 2:3) and had passed through severe
 suffering on account of their faith shortly afterwards. A con-
 siderable time had elapsed since then, during which the early
 leaders of the church had died. This interval fatal, together

6. Milligan, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 35.
7. Ibid., p. 41.
8. Bruce, A. B., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 2.

with a contemporary pressure from the outside, threatened to prove dangerous to them on account of their dullness of faith (Heb. 5:11-12). And it is to this situation that the writer addresses himself."⁹ It seems on first enlightenment the "Hebrews" had showed themselves sincere, expressing Christian love, enduring persecution, taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods "knowing that ye yourselves have a better possession and an abiding one."¹⁰ But later on because of imperfect apprehension of the doctrines of Christianity the "Hebrews" allow Christianity to lose its power over them. "The Jewish leaven in the mass became too strong. Oppressed, disheartened, embarrassed in belief, they were on the point of falling back again to the Judaism they had always partly clung to, of throwing away the confession of Christ which seemed so unreliable, and of seeking salvation again in the old sanctuary with its priests and sacrifices which had never really been renounced."¹¹ As to apostasy from Christianity to Judaism, von Soden and others have argued that the "Hebrews" were not in danger, but were rather "falling away from all faith into unbelief and materialism, like the Israelites in the wilderness or Esau. With all its references to Old Testament sacrifice and ceremonial, the letter contains not a single warning against reviving them, nor does it give any indications

9. Moffatt, James, An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, p. 443.

10. Hebrews 10:32-34

11. Beyschlag, Willibald, New Testament Theology, Vol. II, p. 289.

with a contemporary pressure from the outside, threatened to prove dangerous to them on account of their blindness of faith (Heb. 5:11-12). And it is to this situation that the writer addresses himself.⁹ It seems on first enlightenment the "Hebrews" had showed themselves sincere, expressing Christian love, enduring persecution, taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods "knowing that ye yourselves have a better possession and an abiding one."¹⁰ But later on because of imperfect apprehension of the doctrine of Christianity the "Hebrews" allow Christianity to lose its power over them. "The Jewish leaves in the mass became too strong. Oppressed, distressed, embarrassed in belief, they were on the point of falling back again to the Judaism they had always partly clung to, of throwing away the confession of Christ which seemed so unprofitable, and of seeking salvation again in the old sanctuary with its priests and sacrifices which had never really been renounced."¹¹ As to apostasy from Christianity to Judaism, von Boden and others have argued that the "Hebrews" were not in danger, but were rather "falling away from all faith into unbelief and materialism, like the Israelites in the wilderness or Israel. With all its references to Old Testament sacrifice and ceremonial, the letter contains not a single warning against reviving them, nor does it give any indication

9. Moffett, James, An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, p. 447.
 10. Hebrews 10:32-34.
 11. Beyersdoorn, Willibald, New Testament Theology, Vol. II, p. 289.

that the readers were in danger of so doing. But it has been too readily assumed that these facts prove that the readers were not Jews. The pressure of social influence and persecution rendered Jews and Jewish Christians, as well as Gentile Christians, liable to apostatize to heathenism or irreligion."¹² But the Epistle itself does not give direct evidence of this.

It is not possible for us to determine the exact dangers into which the Hebrews were falling. We can conclude, however, that the "supreme peril of the church under the stress of persecution was the peril of relapse, and the primary object of the Epistle to the Hebrews is to face this peril and stem the tide of desertion."¹³ There was certainly a failure in spiritual zeal, attendance at the Christian assemblies, in ministering to others. There were three things about Christianity that definitely caused difficulty, and the three problems are precisely taken up by the author. First, the "Hebrews" could not see how the new religion, which appeared as a novelty and innovation, could supersede an ancient, divinely appointed religion. Leviticalism had existed so long it was almost incomprehensible that a religion as young as Christianity, could make it pass away. Had not the Old Testament contained the final revelation of God, and had not the Law of Moses verified God's will and purpose? Second, they could not understand how Jesus, as the Christ, could undergo humiliation and

12. The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Vol. II, p. 1359.

13. Abingdon Commentary, p. 1295, article on Heb. by Andrews, H. T.

that the readers were in danger of so doing. But it has been too readily assumed that these facts prove that the readers were not Jews. The pressure of social influence and persecution rendered Jews and Jewish Christians, as well as Gentile Christians, liable to apostatize to heathenism or irreligion.¹² But the Epistle itself does not give direct evidence of this. It is not possible for us to determine the exact dangers into which the Hebrews were falling. We can conclude, however, that the "anxious peril" of the church under the stress of persecution was the peril of relapse, and the primary object of the Epistle to the Hebrews is to face this peril and stem the tide of desertion.¹³ There was certainly a failure in spiritual zeal, attendance at the Christian assemblies, in ministering to others. There were false things about Christianity that definitely caused difficulty, and the three problems are precisely taken up by the author. First, the "Hebrews" could not see how the new religion, which appeared as a novelty and innovation, could supersede an ancient, divinely appointed religion. Leviticalism had existed so long it was almost incomprehensible that a religion as young as Christianity, could make it pass away. Had not the Old Testament contained the final revelation of God, and had not the law of Moses verified God's will and purpose? Second, they could not understand how Jesus, as the Christ, could undergo humiliation and

12. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. II, p. 1559.
 13. Adoration Commentary, p. 1205, article on Heb. by Andrews, R. W.

suffering. "They were unable to reconcile the indignity of Christ's earthly experience with the dignity of His Person as the Son of God and promised Messiah."¹⁴ The glory of the Cross, and the honor which came to Jesus with his appointment as Savior was incomprehensible to them. Third, they were so bound by legal and technical ideas of priesthood that they overlooked Jesus as a priest. They neglected completely the thought of Jesus' sacrifice as a part of a great and eternal priesthood. With these conditions in mind we can see why the author in his Epistle aims to show that Christianity is better than Leviticalism, that it is the absolute and perfect religion; to point out that the Person and work of Christ were greater than the readers supposed; and to present to his readers Christ as a Priest, with an eternal consummating Priesthood.

14. Bruce, A. B., Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 12.

15. Hastings, James, Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. II, p. 98.

suffering. "They were unable to reconcile the indignity of Christ's earthly experience with the dignity of His Person as the Son of God and promised Messiah."¹⁴ The glory of the Cross, and the honor which came to Jesus with His appointment as Savior was incomprehensible to them. Third, they were so bound by legal and technical ideas of priesthood that they overlooked Jesus as a priest. They neglected completely the thought of Jesus' sacrifice as a part of a great and eternal priesthood. With these conditions in mind we can see why the author in his Epistle aims to show that Christianity is better than Leviticalism, that it is the absolute and perfect religion; to point out that the Person and work of Christ were greater than the readers supposed; and to present to his readers Christ as a Priest, with an eternal consecrating priesthood.

Chapter II

The Author's Presentation of Jesus

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the author presents Jesus in terms of the priesthood. This conception of the author, of Jesus as a High Priest, is a strange and almost unique idea in the New Testament. The author may have taken his idea from early Christian thought. Paul suggests the idea when he says Jesus makes intercession for us at the right hand of God (Romans 8:34b), but he does not enlarge the idea. Our attention has been called to the fact that the Fourth Gospel gives us the prayer of Christ on the eve of his death, in a priestly manner. The Book of Revelation has the thought of believers as being priests unto God, but there is no representation of Christ as priest. This great idea of Jesus as High Priest of a new covenant is developed by the author of Hebrews so as to express through it the whole significance of Jesus. He is made the object and end of all the rites, ceremonies and sacrifices of the Mosaic system. The author conceives of the priest as the "person through whom and through whose ministry people draw near to God, and they are 'sanctified'; that is, made people of God, and enabled to worship"¹⁵; the priest is the means by which men draw near to God. Without mediation, the author believes there is no access to God. The character of religion depends upon the character of the mediator. Thus, if the

15. Hastings, James, Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. II, p. 98.

The Author's Presentation of Jesus

In the epistle to the Hebrews the author presents Jesus in terms of the priesthood. This conception of the author, of Jesus as a High Priest, is a strange and almost unique idea in the New Testament. The author may have taken his idea from early Christian thought. Paul suggests the idea when he says Jesus makes intercession for us at the right hand of God (Romans 8:34), but he does not enlarge the idea. Our attention has been called to the fact that the Fourth Gospel gives us the prayer of Christ on the eve of his death, in a priestly manner. The Book of Revelation has the thought of believers as being priests unto God, but there is no representation of Christ as priest. This great idea of Jesus as High Priest of a new covenant is developed by the author of Hebrews so as to express through it the whole significance of Jesus. He is made the object and end of all the rites, ceremonies and sacrifices of the Mosiac system. The author conceives of the priest as the "person through whom and through whose ministry people draw near to God, and they are 'sanctified'; that is, made people of God, and enabled to worship"; the priest is the means by which men draw near to God. Without mediation, the author believes there is no access to God. The character of religion depends upon the character of the mediator. Thus, if the

character of the intercessor is imperfect, permanent access to God is not possible. But with a perfect mediator the conscience of men is purged, sin is removed, the way to the Holy of Holies is opened and a covenant of lasting fellowship between God and the people can be achieved. For the author the perfect mediator, the perfect priest, is Jesus Christ.

Jesus in Terms of the Priesthood

The author could not lay claim for Jesus to a priesthood of priestly robes and visible materials of sacrifice as sheep, goats, doves, oxen. He was perfectly conscious of the fact that the readers of the Epistle had this technical conception of priesthood, and that it was necessary for him to show them that there was another type of priesthood other than the legal, recognized by Scripture. This priesthood had a priest far superior to the Levitical priests. How very inadequate were the Levitical priests when compared to the standard of the perfect priest who should be able to control anger, impatience, disgust, contempt; who should not be too sympathetic to become the tool of men's ignorance or prejudice; who should be able to pity the ignorant and sinful, teaching the ignorant and bringing the erring back into the fold; who should be "not a legislator, enacting laws with rigid penalties attached", who should not be a "judge, but rather an advocate pleading for his clients"; who should not be a "prophet giving in vehement

character of the intercessor is imperfect, permanent access to God is not possible. But with a perfect mediator the consciousness of men is purged, sin is removed, the way to the Holy of Holies is opened and a covenant of lasting fellowship between God and the people can be achieved. For the author the perfect mediator, the perfect priest, is Jesus Christ.

Jesus in Terms of the Priesthood

The author could not lay claim for Jesus to a priesthood of priestly robes and visible materials of sacrifice as sheep, goats, doves, oxen. He was perfectly conscious of the fact that the readers of the Epistle had this technical conception of priesthood, and that it was necessary for him to show them that there was another type of priesthood other than the legal, recognized by Scripture. This priesthood had a priest far superior to the Levitical priests. How very inadequate were the Levitical priests when compared to the standard of the perfect priest who should be able to control anger, impatience, disgust, contempt; who should not be too sympathetic to become the fool of men's ignorance or prejudice; who should be able to pity the ignorant and sinful, teaching the ignorant and bringing the erring back into the fold; who should be "not a legislator, enacting laws with rigid penalties attached", who should not be a "judge, but rather an advocate pleading for his clients"; who should not be a "prophet crying in vehement

language to the Divine displeasure against transgression, but rather an intercessor imploring mercy, appeasing anger, striving to awaken Divine pity."¹⁶ The Levitical priests were "only by their office distinguished from the rest of their brethren, being equally frail, mortal and corruptible."¹⁷ Being mortal the Levitical priests died and did not continue as priests. It was by physical descent the Levitical priesthood was carried on. These priests were sinful for it was necessary for them to offer sacrifice for their sins before those of the people. Since the priest is selected from men, he is "himself a sinner, who is beset with weakness which obliges him to present offerings for his own sins as well as for those of the people. Thus one of the first acts, in the ritual of the day, was the offering of a bull by the priest 'to make an atonement for himself, and for his house' (Leviticus 16:11). There was thus no doubt as to his sinful character, nor as to his own personal need and the need of his colleagues for divine forgiveness."¹⁸ In contrast to all this the author of Hebrews presents Jesus as the priest of an eternal priesthood, one whose priesthood based no claim on physical descent, one whose priest needs to offer no sacrifice for himself as he was sinless. It was as a priest of a superior priesthood that Jesus was placed in

16. Bruce, A. B., Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 179.

17. Clarke, Adam, Commentary, Hebrews, p. 738.

18. Robinson, Theodore, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 58.

language to the Divine displeasure against transgression, but rather an intercessor imploring mercy, appeasing anger, striving to awaken Divine pity.¹⁶ The Levitical priests were "only by their office distinguished from the rest of their brethren, being equally frail, mortal and corruptible."¹⁷ Being mortal the Levitical priests died and did not continue as priests. It was by physical descent the Levitical priesthood was carried on. These priests were sinful for it was necessary for them to offer sacrifice for their sins before those of the people. Since the priest is selected from men, he is "himself a sinner, who is beset with weakness which obliges him to present offerings for his own sins as well as for those of the people. Thus one of the first acts, in the ritual of the day, was the offering of a bull by the priest 'to make an atonement for himself, and for his house' (Leviticus 16:11). . . . There was thus no doubt as to his sinful character, nor as to his own personal need and the need of his colleagues for divine forgiveness."¹⁸ In contrast to all this the author of Hebrews presents Jesus as the priest of an eternal priesthood, one whose priesthood based no claim on physical descent, one whose priestly needs to offer no sacrifice for himself as he was sinless. It was as a priest of a superior priesthood that Jesus was placed in

16. Bruce, A. B., Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 179.
 17. Clarke, Adam, Commentary, Hebrews, p. 753.
 18. Robinson, Theodore, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 58.

high relief by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Jesus' priesthood was a drastic change over the Levitical. It was a priesthood which brought perfection; it pardoned guilt; by it men were sanctified; by it men could cleanse their consciences; it brought men close to God. By it Jesus does not "abide in his incompleteness, but passes through to completeness, so that his offering being made after reaching completeness, will not need to be for his own sins, as well as for those of the people."¹⁹

According to the Law the author of Hebrews could not present Jesus as a priest because he was not from the tribe of Levi, but Judah. The Law decreed that tribes other than Levi were not allowed to minister at the altar. The author was faced with what seemed an immountable objection, Jesus' claim to be priest, but he cleverly uses this apparent difficulty to advantage. It was possible to establish Jesus as priest only by appealing to a type of priesthood other than the Levitical. So it was that the author appeals to Melchizedek who was the "priest of the most high God"(Genesis 14:18). Nairne has said, "The author wanted a short phrase, a label, for his idea of priesthood. None would suit him but one that came from his Scriptures. Hence he chose this: 'after the order of Melchizedek'."²⁰ To Melchizedek the author gives

19. Gould, Ezra, Biblical Theology of the New Testament, p. 167.

20. Nairne, Alexander, The Epistle of Priesthood, p. 51.

great prominence in his writing. He uses Melchizedek's priesthood as a means of showing that Jesus could be a priest though not possessing the legal qualifications as specified by the Law. This brain child of the author is cleverly introduced to us in a short scripture portrait. "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of peace; without father, without mother; having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God abideth a priest continually."²¹

The author has appealed to Old Testament for his authority using two Old Testament passages:- Genesis 14:18 "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God" and Psalms 110:4 "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." Suddenly Melchizedek comes on the scene, and as suddenly, leaves. This mysterious entrance and exit of him is used by the author to prove his divine origin and timeless existence. There is no mention of the parentage of Melchizedek. Robinson says, "There is no genealogy of Melchizedek, no section beginning, 'These are the generations of Melchizedek', and no account of his

21. Hebrews 7:1-3.

great prominence in his writing. He uses Melchizedek's
priesthood as a means of showing that Jesus could be a priest
though not possessing the legal qualifications as specified by
the Law. This brilliant child of the author is cleverly introduced
to us in a short scripture portrait. "For this Melchizedek,
king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who was Abraham
receiving from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;
to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by
interpretation king of righteousness, and after that also king
of Salem, which is king of peace; without father, without
mother; having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but
made like unto the Son of God abideth a priest continually." 21

The author has appealed to Old Testament for his authority
using two Old Testament passages: - Genesis 14:18 "And Mel-
chizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he
was the priest of the most high God" and Psalm 110:4 "The
Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for
ever after the order of Melchizedek." Suddenly Melchizedek
comes on the scene, and as suddenly, leaves. This mysterious
entrance and exit of him is used by the author to prove his
divine origin and timeless existence. There is no mention of
the parentage of Melchizedek. Robinson says, "There is no
genealogy of Melchizedek, no section beginning, 'These are
the generations of Melchizedek', and no account of his

ancestry."²² This is made a significant fact by the author. Here was a priest different from that of the tribe of Levi in which parenthood was so important. The Melchizedekian Priesthood depended on personal qualification not on physical descent. It rested on God's appointment not on genealogy. "The fact that he had no recorded father, mother or lineage, enhanced his dignity because the Aaronic priesthood depended exclusively on the power to prove direct descent from Aaron which necessitated a most scrupulous care in the preservation of the priestly genealogies."²³ No mention of the death of Melchizedek was the ground on which our author says, "neither beginnings of days, nor end of life." It is the absence of mention of birth and death which makes it possible for him to claim the eternal duration of the Melchizedekian order. This priesthood was not a rude, inferior one, but one fit for kings; an eternal priesthood, established by oath. The author conceived a priesthood such that out of its very nature its eternity followed. Melchizedek's "name and title are significant; for he was both King of Righteousness, and then (for the order is important) King of Peace; righteousness and peace being the chief ends that were to be attained through a priesthood."²⁴ This suggestion of righteousness and peacefulness, as well as

22. Robinson, Theodore, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 91.

23. Farrar, F. W., The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews, p. 117.

24. Inge, W. R. and Gould, H. L., The Study Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 61.

ancestry." ²² This is made a significant fact by the author. There was a priest different from that of the tribe of Levi in which priesthood was so important. The Melchizedekian Priesthood depended on personal qualification not on physical descent. It rested on God's appointment not on genealogy. "The fact that he had no recorded father, mother or lineage, enhanced his dignity because the Aaronic priesthood depended exclusively on the power to prove direct descent from Aaron which necessitated a most scrupulous care in the preservation of the priestly genealogy." ²³ No mention of the death of Melchizedek was the ground on which our author says, "neither beginning of days nor end of life." It is the absence of mention of birth and death which makes it possible for him to claim the eternal duration of the Melchizedekian order. This priesthood was not a rude, inferior one, but one fit for kings; an eternal priesthood, established by oath. The author conceived a priesthood such that out of its very nature its eternality followed. Melchizedek's "name and title are significant; for he was both King of Righteousness, and then (for the order is important) King of Peace; righteousness and peace being the chief ends that were to be attained through a priesthood." ²⁴ This suggestion of righteousness and peacefulness, as well as

²² Robinson, Theodore, The Motives to the Hebrews, p. 91.
²³ Farrar, F. W., The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews, p. 117.
²⁴ Lake, W. R. and Gould, H. L., The Study Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 51.

the royal dignity of Melchizedek "cast a certain radiance about his figure very much to the writer's purpose."²⁵ To sum up the general characteristics of the Melchizedekian Priesthood we find that the enumeration given by Bruce takes care of all points. The Melchizedekian Priesthood was a royal priesthood - was he not king?; was a righteous priesthood - was not his name king of righteousness?; was a priesthood promoting peace - did not King of Salem, mean, king of peace?; a personal priesthood - was it not independent of ancestry and inheritance?; was an eternal priesthood - did not its very nature make it so?

The order of Melchizedek did not base its importance on priestly acts, but on itself. It was different from the Levitical priesthood in that it rested "not after the law of carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life."²⁶ This priesthood was established "for ever", eternally as well as spiritually. "To be a priest 'for ever' is to be freed from all the limitations and weaknesses which beset the ordinary priest of earth. And it is with the object of further enforcing this that the other points mentioned are introduced."²⁷ By lines of exegesis our author sets out to show how the priesthood of Melchizedek is superior to the Levitical priesthood. Melchizedek is superior to all human beings for he had

25. Goodspeed, Edgar J., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 65.

26. Hebrews 7:16.

27. Milligan, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 114.

the royal dignity of Melchizedek "cast a certain radiance about his figure very much to the writer's purpose." ²⁵ To sum up the general characteristics of the Melchizedekian Priesthood we find that the enumeration given by Bruce takes care of all points. The Melchizedekian Priesthood was a royal priesthood - was he not king?; was a righteous priesthood - was not his name king of righteousness?; was a priesthood promoting peace - did not king of Salem, mean, king of peace?; a personal priesthood - was it not independent of ancestry and inheritance?; was an eternal priesthood - did not its very nature make it so? The order of Melchizedek did not have the importance ordinarily ascribed, but on itself. It was different from the Levitical priesthood in that it rested "not after the law of carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." ²⁶ This priesthood was established "for ever", eternally as well as spiritually. "To be a priest 'for ever' is to be freed from all the limitations and weaknesses which beset the ordinary priest of earth. And it is with the object of further enforcing this that the other points mentioned are introduced." ²⁷ By lines of exegesis our author sets out to show how the priesthood of Melchizedek is superior to the Levitical priesthood. Melchizedek is superior to all human beings for he had

25. Goodspeed, Edgar J., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 65.
 26. Hebrews 7:16.
 27. Milligan, George, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 114.

no death. Since they are mortal the conclusion is irresistible; "the immortal is greater than the mortal, and we may, therefore argue, the priesthood which is based on an immortal founder is necessarily superior to one which had a beginning in time, and therefore will also have an end."²⁸

The author tells us that this priest, Melchizedek, to whom he appeals was great enough to receive a "tenth of the spoils" (Hebrews 7:4), from the patriarch Abraham, and had given a blessing to Abraham. As the greater always does the blessing Melchizedek is established as greater than Abraham. Surely the priesthood of Melchizedek "who inspires reverence in the noblest, is of a very high order, superior to that based on a statute, a mere hereditary trade or profession."²⁹ And the author points out that Levi was "yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him." So too, Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek. Thus, the order which arose with Melchizedek was made to supersede the Levitical order. God had set up a competing agent because the old order was not adequate. God had appointed another priest, different from those existing as an evidence that those of the old order were not giving salvation. "The appointment of another order of priest is proof that there was need for it."³⁰

28. Robinson, Theodore, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 94.

29. Bruce, A. B., Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 257.

30. Lowrie, Samuel T., An Explanation of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 239.

no death. Since they are mortal the conclusion is irresistible: "the immortal is greater than the mortal, and we may, therefore argue, the priesthood which is based on an immortal founder is necessarily superior to one which had a beginning in time, and therefore will also have an end."²⁸

The author tells us that this priest, Melchizedek, to whom he appeals was great enough to receive a "seal of the apostle" (Hebrews 7:1), from the patriarch Abraham, and had given a blessing to Abraham. As the greater always does the blessing Melchizedek is established as greater than Abraham. Surely the priesthood of Melchizedek "who inspires reverence in the priest, is of a very high order, superior to that based on a statute, a mere hereditary trade or profession."²⁹ And the author points out that Levi was "yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him." So too, Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek. Thus, the order which arose with Melchizedek was made to supersede the Levitical order. God had set up a competing agent because the old order was not adequate. God had appointed another priest, different from those existing as an evidence that those of the old order were not giving satisfaction. "The appointment of another order of priest is proof that there was need for it."³⁰

28. Robinson, Theodore, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 94.
 29. Bruce, A. B., Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 257.
 30. Lowrie, Samuel L., An Examination of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 259.

Eligibility 'after the order of Melchizedek'

As has been said Jesus could not possibly be a priest of the Levitical order. Since he was of the tribe of Judah it was necessary that he, like Melchizedek, be of a different order. Into the Epistle of Hebrews we have introduced an order to which Jesus was eligible. In the words of the Psalmist, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek", God promised another priesthood and made Jesus a priest of an eternal priesthood. The Levitical system "had not been original, for another priesthood - one superior to Abraham and all his descendants - had existed centuries before the Law came into being, and centuries after the Law was given; the Psalmist spoke of that same ancient priesthood, as being the ideal which should find its fulfilment only in the Christ. The Law-ordained priesthood was that of Aaron, and it was still necessary for another sort of priest to emerge. There was already in existence this priesthood which had the rank of Melchizedek, and the conditions were fulfilled when this once more emerged. It had been, apparently, in abeyance for centuries, while the Aaronic order took its place, but now the time, foretold by the psalmist, had arrived when it should resume its true position."³¹ For the author of Hebrews Melchizedek is the foundation of this new order, but his interest "is not in the

31. Robinson, Theodore, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 98.

As has been said Jesus could not possibly be a priest of the Levitical order, since he was of the tribe of Judah it was necessary that he, like Melchizedek, be of a different order. Into the Epistle of Hebrews we have introduced an order to which Jesus was eligible. In the words of the Psalmist, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek", God promised another priesthood and made Jesus a priest of an eternal priesthood. The Levitical system "had not been original, for another priesthood - one superior to Abraham and all his descendants - had existed centuries before the law came into being, and centuries after the law was given; the Psalmist spoke of that same ancient priesthood, as being the ideal which should find its fulfillment only in the Christ. The law-ordinations were that of Aaron, and it was still necessary for another sort of priest to emerge. There was already in existence this priesthood which had the rank of Melchizedek, and the conditions were fulfilled when this once more emerged. It had been, apparently, in abeyance for centuries, while the Aaronic order took its place, but now the time, foretold by the Psalmist, had arrived when it should resume its true position."⁵¹ For the author of Hebrews Melchizedek is the foundation of this new order, but his interest "is not in the

51. Robinson, Theodore, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 98.

actual Melchizedek but in the prophetic significance of this dim figure, who is so described in Scripture as to typify the Son of God."³² The author very subtly swings from the type to the Great High Priest. "The priest Melchizedek is so much an abstraction, a mere anticipation of the coming Priest, the type changes even as we contemplate it, into the reality."³³

The author draws a parallel between Melchizedek and Jesus showing that they agree in title and descent. Melchizedek is king of peace and righteousness; so is Jesus. Melchizedek's priesthood had no beginning or end; so too with Jesus' since he had an unchangeable priesthood, one that did not pass from him to another. The author of Hebrews holds that Jesus was eligible as a priest after the order of Melchizedek because "the author of the 110th Psalm had already discovered Melchizedek and had spoken of him as the representative of the ideal priesthood, and had said that the Messiah when he came would belong to the type of Melchizedek - and not to the type of the ordinary Levitical priests."³⁴ Jesus was eligible "after the order of Melchizedek" for he was not a transient priest relying on mortal life, as the Levitical priests, but "abideth priest continually". Jesus was a priest for ever. His priesthood was such as was typically set forth by Melchizedek's priesthood. "That Christ is Priest for ever can be

32. Scott, E. F., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 127.

33. Ibid, p. 127-128.

34. Abingdon Bible Commentary, p. 1309.

actual Melchizedek but in the prophetic significance of this
 his figure, who is so described in Scripture as to typify the
 Son of God.³² The author very subtly awakes from the type
 to the Great High Priest. "The priest Melchizedek is as much
 an abstraction, a mere anticipation of the coming Priest, the
 type changes even as we contemplate it, into the reality."³³
 The author draws a parallel between Melchizedek and Jesus
 knowing that they agree in title and descent. Melchizedek is
 king of peace and righteousness; so is Jesus. Melchizedek's
 priesthood had no beginning or end; so too with Jesus, since
 he had an unchangeable priesthood, one that did not pass from
 him to another. The author of Hebrews holds that Jesus was
 eligible as a priest after the order of Melchizedek because
 "the author of the 11th Psalm had already discovered Mel-
 chizedek and had spoken of him as the representative of the
 ideal priesthood, and had said that the Messiah when he came
 would belong to the type of Melchizedek - and not to the type
 of the ordinary Levitical priests."³⁴ Jesus was eligible
 "after the order of Melchizedek" for he was not a transient
 priest relying on mortal life, as the Levitical priests, but
 "abiding priest continually". Jesus was a priest for ever.
 His priesthood was such as was typically set forth by Mel-
 chizedek's priesthood. "That Great is Priest for ever can be

32. Scott, E. F., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 127.
 33. Ibid., p. 127-128.
 34. Abington Bible Commentary, p. 1309.

symbolically taught only by negations, by the absence of beginning and an end, in some way as the hieroglyphics represent eternity by a line turning back upon itself. In this negative fashion, Melchizedek has been assimilated to the Son of God. His history was intentionally so related by God's Spirit that the sacred writer's silence even is significant. For Melchizedek suddenly appears on the scene and as suddenly vanishes, never to return. Now, however, for the first time a man stands before us of whose genealogy and birth nothing is said. Even his death is not mentioned. What is known of him wonderfully helps the allegorical significance of the intentional silence of Scripture. He is king and priest, and the one act of his life is to bestow his priestly benediction on the heir of the promises. No more appropriate or more striking symbol of Christ's priesthood can be imagined."³⁵ Jesus was also eligible "after the order of Melchizedek" because he had been constituted a priest by oath, "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek", said the words of the Psalmist. No such oath accompanied Levitical priestly appointment. This oath of God described Jesus as preforming the functions of his priestly office in eternity. Jesus' priesthood "after the order of Melchizedek was "not legal but spiritual, not carnal

35. Williams, George, *The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 59.

35. Edwards, Thomas C., The Expositor's Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 116-117.

symbolically taught only by negations, by the absence of beginning and an end, in some way as the hieroglyphic representation eternally by a line turning back upon itself. In this negative fashion, Weichsäcker has been assimilated to the Son of God. His history was intentionally so related by God's Spirit that the sacred writer's silence even is significant. For Weichsäcker suddenly appears on the scene and as suddenly vanishes, never to return. Now, however, for the first time a man stands before us of whose genealogy and birth nothing is said. Even his death is not mentioned. What is known of him wonderfully helps the allegorical significance of the intentional silence of Scripture. He is king and priest, and the act of his life is to bestow his priestly benediction on the heir of the promise. No more appropriate or more striking symbol of Christ's priesthood can be imagined." 35

Jesus was also eligible "after the order of Melchizedek" because he had been constituted a priest by oath, "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek", said the words of the Psalmist. No such oath accompanied Levitical priestly appointment. This oath of God described Jesus as performing the functions of his priestly office in eternity. Jesus' priesthood "after the order of Melchizedek" was "not legal but spiritual, not carnal

and consequently transitory, but eternal, while as confirmed by an oath, it is immutable, and inviolable, because it is embodied in one, and does not pass on to another. It is because Christ is High Priest after this order that He perfectly meets the needs of humanity, and is able to discharge a perfect ministry."³⁶

The author then goes on to make it incumbent on his reader to enter into a detailed proof of the High Priesthood of Christ from the Old Testament. As he exhibits on the one hand that Jesus satisfied the formal requirements of the High Priesthood, he displays on the other the uniqueness and perfection with which he realizes that idea by insisting on the distinction between Him and the high priests of the Old Testament."³⁷

The author stresses the perfection and finality of Jesus' Priesthood. Jesus was the true priest whose blood was the blood of the eternal covenant; who was the author of eternal salvation; who received eternal redemption and who enabled men to receive eternal inheritance. Because he was the true priest he could mediate between God and sinful men and bring to men a complete and abiding fellowship with God.

The Qualifications for Priesthood

A high priest should be "a partaker of human infirmities,

36. Milligan, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 64.

37. Bengel, Willibrod, New Testament Theology, Vol. II, p. 34.
 38. Milligan, G. C., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 101.

and consequently transitory, but eternal, while as confirmed
by its death, it is immortal, and inviolable, because it is
embodied in one, and does not pass on to another. It is
because Christ is High Priest after this order that He
perfectly meets the needs of humanity, and is able to discharge
a perfect ministry." 36

Chapter III

The High Priesthood of Jesus

It was natural for the author of Hebrews to borrow from the Old Testament "the idea of High Priesthood as the designation of that which really makes Jesus our Saviour, and the task he had undertaken for his readers made it incumbent on him to enter into a detailed proof of the High Priesthood of Christ from the Old Testament. As he exhibits on the one hand that Jesus satisfied the formal requirements of the High Priesthood, he displays on the other the uniqueness and perfection with which He realizes that idea by insisting on the distinction between Him and the high priests of the Old Testament."³⁷

The author stresses the perfection and finality of Jesus' Priesthood. Jesus was the true priest whose blood was the blood of the eternal covenant; who was the author of eternal salvation; who received eternal redemption and who enabled men to receive eternal inheritance. Because he was the true priest he could mediate between God and sinful men and bring to men a complete and abiding fellowship with God.

The Qualifications for Priesthood

A high priest should be "a partaker of human infirmities, in order that he may have fellow-feeling" with men, and his office "should not be self assumed but appointed by God."³⁸

37. Beyschlag, Willibald, New Testament Theology, Vol. II, p.316.

38. Wickham, E.C., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. xxix.

Chapter III

The High Priesthood of Jesus

It was natural for the author of Hebrews to borrow from the Old Testament "the idea of High Priesthood as the designation of that which really makes Jesus our Saviour, and the task he had undertaken for his readers made it incumbent on him to enter into a detailed proof of the High Priesthood of Christ from the Old Testament. As he exhibits on the one hand that Jesus satisfied the formal requirements of the High Priesthood, he displays on the other the uniqueness and perfection with which He realizes that idea by insisting on the distinction between Him and the high priests of the Old Testament." 37

The author stresses the perfection and finality of Jesus' Priesthood. Jesus was the true priest whose blood was the blood of the eternal covenant; who was the author of eternal salvation; who received eternal redemption and who enabled men to receive eternal inheritance. Because he was the true priest he could mediate between God and sinful men and bring to men a complete and abiding fellowship with God.

The Qualifications for Priesthood

A high priest should be "a partaker of human infirmities, in order that he may have fellow-feeling" with men, and his office "should not be self-assumed but appointed by God." 38

37. Baym, William, New Testament Theology, Vol. II, p. 316.
38. Hebrews, E.C., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. xix.

According to Nairne there are three essential characteristics for any high priest:- manhood, and the sympathy which goes with it; the duty of offering and appointment by the voice of God. Stevens gives two requirements for the high priestly office; he who will minister on behalf of men, must himself be a man, who enters into sorrows and sins of menkind with full sympathy; he must be divinely appointed, not self appointed. The author of Hebrews says, "For every high priest, being taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can bear gently with the ignorant and erring, for that he himself is compassed with infirmity; and by reason thereof is bound, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And no man taketh the honor unto himself, but when he is called of God."³⁹ Our author seems to say that every properly qualified high priest becomes one with his brethren if he is to be the representative before God; that since he has lived among men he can better understand those whom he represents and as he had compassion for those whom he understands his duty of offering sacrifices for the sinful can better be accomplished, since the provision of the law demands he offer for himself as well. Because of these things, "amidst all the wonderful glory of his priesthood on the Day of Atonement, he was yet in reality as one of them."⁴⁰

39. Hebrews 5:1-5.

40. Milligan, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 105.

According to Watson there are three essential characteristics for any high priest: - manhood, and the sympathy which goes with it; the duty of offering and appointment by the voice of God. Stevens gives two requirements for the high priestly office; he who will minister on behalf of men, must himself be a man, who enters into sorrows and sins of mankind with full sympathy; he must be divinely appointed, not self appointed. The author of Hebrews says, "For every high priest, being taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can bear gently with the ignorant and erring, for that he himself is compassed with infirmity; and by reason thereof is bound, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And no man taketh the honor unto himself, but when he is called of God." Our author seems to say that every properly qualified high priest becomes one with his brethren if he is to be the representative before God; that since he has lived among men he can better understand those whom he represents and as he has compassion for those whom he understands his duty of offering sacrifices for the sinful can better be accomplished, since the provision of the law demands he offer for himself as well. Because of these things, "amidst all the wonderful glory of his priesthood on the Day of Atonement, he was yet in reality as one of them."

It must be remembered that the Hebrew Christians to whom the author wrote, "did not connect the idea of priesthood with Christ, though they knew Him as their Prophet and King."⁴¹ The author takes special pains to point out the way Jesus met the qualifications for priesthood. Every properly qualified high priest must have a call from God and sympathize with men. The author of Hebrews shows that Jesus had such a call and was conspicuously sympathetic. As a high priest "taken from among men" he had more fellow feeling with men; as a high priest "ordained for men" he could sympathize with those he represented before God. Jesus as high priest not only understood sinners and knew how to help them but he contacted the worshippers with God and knew how to remove the obstacles which prevented contact with God. Jesus was not a "sacerdotal drudge" but a priest who carried on a ministry of voluntary humiliation. Jesus was an eternal priest whose priestly office did not pass from him to another. Jesus was appointed by God. The author of Hebrews finds verification of this in the Psalms, "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee."⁴² It was as the Son that Jesus had "all the qualifications fitting him to be High Priest."⁴³ Jesus had by his filial nature all that was necessary for his position as mediator between God and man.

41. Bruce, A. B., Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 176, quoting from Rendall in The Expositor for Jan. 1889, p. 36.

42. Psalms 2:7.

43. Milligan, G., The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 106.

It must be remembered that the Hebrew Christians to whom the author wrote, "did not connect the idea of priesthood with Christ, though they knew him as their Prophet and King."⁴¹ The author takes special pains to point out the way Jesus met the qualifications for priesthood. Every properly qualified high priest must have a call from God and sympathize with men. The author of Hebrews shows that Jesus had such a call and was consciously sympathetic. As a high priest "taken from among men" he had more fellow feeling with men; as a high priest "ordained for men" he could sympathize with those he represented before God. Jesus as high priest not only understood sinners and knew how to help them but he contacted the worshipers with God and knew how to remove the obstacles which prevented contact with God. Jesus was not a "sacerdotal stranger" but a priest who carried on a ministry of voluntary humiliation. Jesus was an eternal priest whose priestly office did not pass from him to another. Jesus was appointed by God. The author of Hebrews finds verification of this in the Psalm, "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee."⁴² It was as the Son that Jesus had "all the qualifications fitting him to be High Priest."⁴³ Jesus had by his filial nature all that was necessary for his position as mediator between God and man.

41. Bruce, A. A., *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 176, quoting from Bengali in *The Expositor* for Jan. 1889, p. 36.
 42. Psalm 2:7.
 43. William, G., *The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 106.

God's appointment fulfilled one of the major requirements of the High Priesthood. Jesus fulfilled his duty to offer sacrifice for sin. This would have been impossible had he no compassion for the sinful. It was through his training that he fulfilled this requirement as he learned to sympathize with men. Milligan has concisely expressed this requirement of priesthood in his words, "A man suffers, and needs a sympathizing high priest to help him: sympathy can only be thoroughly felt by one who has himself also suffered: Christ, therefore, though Son of God, so entered into our suffering state as to be able to sympathize."⁴⁴ Under the Law "the Jewish high priest was qualified to sympathize with sinners, because he was himself a sinner. But just because he was a sinner he could not help his fellows, for he was caught in the same evil snare."⁴⁵ Jesus was better qualified than the Levitical priests since he made possible an access to God and since he knew how to remove the obstacles that stood in men's way as they approached God. In the Levitical priesthood it was necessary for the priests to offer sacrifices for their own sins. How much more superior to these priests was Jesus as there was no such necessity for him since he was "holy, harmless and undefiled". Jesus as the perfect mediator possessed all the qualifications to bring men to God. He knew how to purge effectually man's conscience, to remove

44. Milligan, George, *The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 107.

45. Peake, A. S., *The New Century Bible*, *Hebrews*, p. 130.

God's appointment fulfilled one of the major requirements of the High Priesthood. Jesus fulfilled his duty to offer sacrifice for sin. This would have been impossible had he no compassion for the sinful. It was through his training that he fulfilled this requirement as he learned to sympathize with men. William has concisely expressed this requirement of priesthood in his words, "A man suffers, and needs a sympathizing high priest to help him: sympathy can only be thoroughly felt by one who has himself also suffered: Christ, therefore, though Son of God, so entered into our suffering state as to be able to sympathize."⁴⁴

Under the law "the Jewish high priest was qualified to sympathize with sinners, because he was himself a sinner. But just because he was a sinner he could not help his fellows, for he was caught in the same evil snare."⁴⁵ Jesus was better qualified than the Levitical priests since he made possible and access to God and since he knew how to remove the obstacles that stood in men's way as they approached God. In the Levitical priesthood it was necessary for the priests to offer sacrifices for their own sins. How much more superior to these priests was Jesus as there was no such necessity for him since he was "holy, harmless and undefiled." Jesus as the perfect mediator possessed all the qualifications to bring men to God. He knew how to purge effectually men's consciences, to remove

⁴⁴ William, George; *The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 107.
⁴⁵ Feebe, A. S.; *The New Century Bible, Hebrews*, p. 130.

sin between God and man and to bring about, by means of these, a true and lasting access to and fellowship with God.

The qualifications which Jesus offered reflected a new priesthood. A priesthood which was constituted by oath. Jesus was not self appointed nor was he a usurper, since he was called to office by God. His obedience to God's will proved he was not a usurper. Jesus' priesthood was as "much more important and solemn as an oath is superior to a command and his suretyship became as much more certain as an oath is superior to a single promise."⁴⁶ Jesus was made a priest for ever--one who was not removable by death, one who had no successor. His priesthood as well as being new, was made indissoluble, founded on an immutable foundation and was inviolable in that it was not overstepped or transgressed by another.

Training for the Priestly Office

The training of Jesus for his priestly office was a technical training which would make him able to do the work he had to do as high priest "after the order of Melchizedek". Jesus was divinely trained for the work to which he was called. His training was enlarging and developing the qualifications he offered for priesthood. Our author says in Hebrews 5:1-4,

46. Barnes, Albert, Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 149.

sin between God and man and to bring about, by means of these,
a true and lasting access to and fellowship with God.

The qualifications which Jesus offered reflected a new
priesthood. A priesthood which was constituted by oath. Jesus
was not self appointed nor was he a usurper, since he was
called to office by God. His obedience to God's will proved he
was not a usurper. Jesus' priesthood was as "much more
important and solemn as an oath is superior to a command and
his suretyship became as much more certain as an oath is
superior to a single promise."⁴⁶ Jesus was made a priest for
ever--one who was not removable by death, one who had no
successor. His priesthood as well as being new, was made
indissoluble, founded on an immutable foundation and was in-
violable in that it was not overstepped or transgressed by
another.

Training for the Priestly Office

The training of Jesus for his priestly office was a
technical training which would make him able to do the work he
had to do as high priest "after the order of Melchizedek".
Jesus was divinely trained for the work to which he was called.
His training was enlarging and developing the qualifications
he offered for priesthood. Our author says in Hebrews 5:1-4,

46. Barnes, Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 142.

"For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason thereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself to offer sins. And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." We have discussed how these qualifications were found in Jesus, but we have not considered in detail how Jesus met these qualifications; how he was trained for his priestly office. It was in his earthly life that Jesus was prepared for his work. He became like those he represented before God; he was tempted; he learned obedience and tasted death. The author of Hebrews did not fail to point out the humanness of Jesus whenever the opportunity presented itself. In his earthly life he learned human needs by his own experiences.

Since every high priest must be "taken from men", incarnation was necessary for Jesus in order that he might become thoroughly in sympathy with humanity. Since he was to be representative of men before God it was necessary for him to be one of them; Jesus' compassion for the ignorant or erring was possible because he was taken from among men, in order that he might have a fellow feeling for those whom he represented. "Sensible of his own ignorance, he is able to sympathize with those who are ignorant; and compassed about

"For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason thereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself to offer sins. And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." We have discussed how these qualifications were found in Jesus, but we have not considered in detail how Jesus met these qualifications; how he was trained for his priestly office. It was in his earthly life that Jesus was prepared for his work. He became like those he represented before God; he was tempted; he learned obedience and tested death. The author of Hebrews did not fail to point out the humanness of Jesus whenever the opportunity presented itself. In his earthly life he learned human needs by his own experience.

Since every high priest must be "taken from men," incarnation was necessary for Jesus in order that he might become thoroughly in sympathy with humanity. Since he was to be representative of men before God it was necessary for him to be one of them. Jesus' compassion for the ignorant or erring was possible because he was taken from among men, in order that he might have a fellow feeling for those whom he represented. "Sensible of his own ignorance, he is able to sympathize with those who are ignorant; and compassed about

with infirmity he is able to succour those who have infirmities."⁴⁷ Jesus was subjected to temptation in his earthly life, he died, and appeared before God. Because of these infirmities which were a part of his training he was qualified to minister for men. The author of Hebrews believed Jesus knew how dreadful the strain of temptation was, for he says, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet, without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). This sinlessness of Jesus in this case was "spoken of as an achievement, a concrete thing rather than abstract, absolute thing, a positive thing rather than a negative thing. For the meaning of the author here evidently is, that Christ has the quality of sympathy because he has actually been tempted in all things (i.e., exactly in the same way) as we are tempted."⁴⁸ It was the sinlessness of Jesus that made him distinctive. Jesus lived an earthly life, was subjected to trials, was tempted and thus could understand the frailty of men. In his temptations he did not fall, as man often did, and so conquered the conflict. "With us the temptation often leads to sin, and also its strength often comes from previous sin. Neither is true of Him."⁴⁹

47. Barnes, Albert, Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 114.

48. MacNeill, Harris, The Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 44.

49. Wickham, E. C., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 32.

which naturally he is able to understand those who have faith-
less. Jesus was subjected to temptation in his earthly
life, he died, and appeared before God. Because of these
infirmities which were a part of his trying as yet-qualified
to minister for men. The author of Hebrews believed Jesus knew
now beyond all the other of temptation, for he knew "for
we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the
feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like
as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15). This statement
of Jesus in this sense was "spoken of as an answer to a
conscience being rather than abstract, concrete thing, a positive
thing rather than a negative thing. For the meaning of the
author here evidently is, that Jesus has the quality of sym-
pathy because he has actually been tempted in all things
(1:10, exactly in the same way) as we are tempted. It was
the sinlessness of Jesus that made his sympathetic. Jesus
lived an earthly life, was subjected to trials, was tempted and
thus could understand the trials of men. In his temptation
he did not fail, as man often did, and so conquered the con-
tention. When as the temptation often leads to sin, and also
the strength of Jesus from previous sin. He is in a
position to help.

17. Barnes, Albert, Hebrews, p. 114.
18. Macmillan, Charles, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 114.
19. Macmillan, Charles, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 114.
20. Macmillan, Charles, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 114.

Jesus "learned obedience by the things which he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). Robinson says the "key to the whole phrase lies in the word 'obedience'. This might, it is true, be rendered and interpreted as meaning how to obey, but the translation fails to bring out the fundamental thought of the writer. Jesus learned obedience, not in the sense of finding out the method by which that end was to be achieved, but in appreciating from practical experience what its full meaning was. Obedience is easy when it and its results are pleasant, but the man who has been tested no further than this knows comparatively little about it. It is only when obedience becomes difficult, painful, even disastrous, that we really discover its meaning. We must know what it costs, we must go with it down into the depths, before we can say that we really understand it. Jesus, on the theory of this writer, did not need to learn that He must obey, or how to obey; what He did need was the practical knowledge, only to be gained from actual experience, of what obedience implied. This even He could attain only going to the extreme of suffering in fulfillment of His Father's will."⁵⁰ Jesus' obedience involved the most dreadful suffering imaginable. The author of Hebrews pointed to Jesus' sufferings - his bitter cries, his tears, his prayers and supplications to Him "that was able to save

50. Robinson, Theodore, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 62-63.

Jesus "learned obedience by the things which he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). Robinson says the "key to the whole passage lies in the word 'obedience'. This might, it is true, be rendered and interpreted as meaning how to obey, but the translation fails to bring out the fundamental thought of the writer. Jesus learned obedience, not in the sense of finding out the method by which that end was to be achieved, but in appreciating from practical experience what the will meaning was. Obedience is easy when it and its results are pleasant, but the man who has been tested no further than this knows comparatively little about it. It is only when obedience becomes difficult, painful, even disastrous, that we really discover its meaning. We must know what it costs, we must go with it down into the depths, before we can say that we really understand it. Jesus, on the theory of this writer, did not need to learn that He must obey, or how to obey; what He did need was the practical knowledge, only to be gained from actual experience, of what obedience involved. This even He could attain only going to the extreme of suffering in fulfillment of His Father's will.⁵⁰ Jesus' obedience involved the most dreadful suffering imaginable. The author of Hebrews pointed to Jesus' sufferings - his bitter cries, his tears, his prayers and supplications to Him "that was able to save

⁵⁰ Robinson, Theodore, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 62-63.

him from death." We are told God heard Jesus "but as this sacrifice had been decided upon in councils of God, He was only so far heard that He was freed from the terrors of death which forced these prayers and tears from Him."⁵¹ Jesus learned obedience in its fullest sense. His complete self surrender came from making his father's will his own in every one of his earthly experiences. The earthly life of Jesus was a process of doing God's will. By this obedient submission to the will of his Father and by his death Jesus became to all who obey Him, 'the author of eternal salvation'. Thus the saving from physical death which He prayed for is contrasted with the eternal saving which He bestows on His people; and the obedience which led Him to submit to that death is paralleled with the obedience which enables them to reap its fruits in eternal salvation."⁵² The author of Hebrews has now arrived at the point where he is ready to declare Jesus, because of his training in his earthly life and because he is the cause of eternal salvation, "called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 5:10).

51. Weiss, Bernhard, A Commentary on the New Testament, Vol. IV, p. 166.

52. Inge, W. R., and Gould, H. L., The Study Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 51.

him from death." We are told God heard Jesus "but as this sacrifice had been decided upon in councils of God, He was only as far heard that He was freed from the terrors of death which forced these prayers and tears from Him."⁵¹ Jesus learned obedience in the fullest sense. His complete self surrender came from making His Father's will His own in every one of His earthly experiences. The earthly life of Jesus was a process of doing God's will. By this obedient submission to the will of His Father and by His death Jesus became to all who obey Him, 'the author of eternal salvation'. Thus the saving from physical death which He prayed for is contrasted with the eternal saving which He bestows on His people; and the obedience which led Him to submit to that death is paralleled with the obedience which enables them to reap its fruits in eternal salvation.⁵² The author of Hebrews has now arrived at the point where he is ready to declare Jesus, because of His training in His earthly life and because He is the cause of eternal salvation, "called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 5:10).

51. Weiss, Bernhard, A Commentary on the New Testament, Vol. IV, p. 166.
52. James, W. R., and Gould, H. L., The Study Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 51.

Chapter IV

The Superiority of Jesus as High Priest

The superiority of Jesus as high priest is one of the great theses of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The author aims to show, at every possible point, that Jesus was far better as a high priest, in both his qualifications and his training, than the Levitical high priests. The author deals with the historical facts of Jesus' life in such a way that he focuses the attention of the reader on the nature of Jesus' Person rather than on the event. For him the events of Jesus' life are the means by which Jesus is "perfected" or made superior. The author sets forth his Christological position making Jesus the "supreme object of religious regard, superior to the prophets, priests, and angels; the Apostle through whom God made His final revelation to men; the Priest who effectually and for ever made that purification of sins which Levitical sacrifices failed to accomplish; the Heir, Maker, and Sustainer of all things; not only above angels, but Divine, God's Eternal Son and perfect image."⁵³ In the Epistle to the Hebrews the author argues that Jesus has a place above all others by reason of His Person, and he manifests Jesus' superiority over the Prophets, the Angels, Moses and Josua, and the Aaronic Priests.

53. Bruce, A. B., Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 26-27.

Chapter IV

The Superiority of Jesus as High Priest

The superiority of Jesus as high priest is one of the great themes of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The author aims to show, at every possible point, that Jesus was far better as a high priest, in both his qualifications and his training, than the Levitical high priests. The author deals with the historical facts of Jesus' life in such a way that he focuses the attention of the reader on the nature of Jesus' Person rather than on the event. For him the events of Jesus' life are the means by which Jesus is "perfected" or made superior. The author sets forth his Christological position making Jesus the "supreme object of religious regard, superior to the prophets, priests, and angels; the Apostle through whom God made His final revelation to men; the Priest who effectually and for ever made that purification of sins which Levitical sacrifices failed to accomplish; the Heir, Maker, and Sustainer of all things; not only above angels, but Divine, God's Eternal Son and perfect image."²⁷ In the Epistle to the Hebrews the author argues that Jesus has a place above all others by reason of His Person, and he manifests Jesus' superiority over the Prophets, the Angels, Moses and Jesus, and the Aaronic Priests.

²⁷ Bruce, A. B., Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 26-27.

By Reason of His Person

The author of Hebrews regarded Sonship as the basis of Christ's Person. He associated this idea with Jesus in the period of pre-existence, the earthly period of the days of his flesh and the period of exaltation. Stress is laid on the Sonship idea frequently as the author refers to Christ "as a Son" (3:6); "the Son" (1:8); "Jesus the Son of God" (4:14); "a son" (5:8); "the Son of God" (10:29). The author concerns himself with the human nature as well as the divine nature of Jesus. Rendall says the "Son of God is set forth in his two-fold nature, at once divine and human as in his own person the one mediator between God and man, in marked opposition to theories of angelic mediation."⁵⁴

1. The Pre-existent Son

The pre-existent glory of the Son is pointed to by the author in Hebrews 2:9 "But, as it is, we do not yet see all things controlled by man; what we do see is Jesus who was put lower than the angels for a little while to suffer death, and who has been crowned with glory and honor, that by God's grace he might taste death for everyone." (Moffatt translation). Here there is suggested a pre-existent state of Christ, before he assumed the rank inferior to the angels, and came among men for

54. Rendall, Frederic, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. xxiv.

The author of Hebrews regarded Sonship as the basis of Christ's Person. He associated this idea with Jesus in the period of pre-existence, the earthly period of the days of his flesh and the period of exaltation. Stress is laid on the Sonship idea frequently as the author refers to Christ "as a Son" (3:6); "the Son" (1:8); "Jesus the Son of God" (4:14); "a son" (5:8); "the Son of God" (10:29). The author connects himself with the human nature as well as the divine nature of Jesus. Randall says the "Son of God is set forth in his two-fold nature, at once divine and human as in his own person the one mediator between God and man, in marked opposition to theories of angelic mediation."²⁴

I. The Pre-existent Son

The pre-existent glory of the Son is pointed to by the author in Hebrews 2:9 "But, as it is, we do not yet see all things controlled by man; what we do see is Jesus who was put lower than the angels for a little while to suffer death, and who has been crowned with glory and honor, that by God's grace he might taste death for everyone." (Moffatt translation). Here there is suggested a pre-existent state of Christ, before he assumed the rank inferior to the angels, and came among men for

²⁴. Randall, Frederick, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. xxiv.

a temporary humiliation, which was one of the first steps in the fulfilment of the whole purpose of God for his Son. "This is a part of the total scheme, and without it Jesus could not have completed His work. It does not affect his real and eternal pre-eminence, for He is for ever crowned with glory and honor, and as soon as the 'little while' is past, He can resume His divine state, and take once more His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high."⁵⁵ There are a few scholars among whom we find Bleek, Kurtz and Westcott, who believe that the author suggests a pre-existent state in his use of the word "heir" in Hebrews 1:2 in reference to the Son as being "appointed heir of all things". Milligan points to a pre-existent state of Christ in the comparison of Christ with Melchizedek in Chapter Seven. "It is noticeable that though in His historical manifestation Christ was long subsequent to Melchizedek, He is brought before us as the original to whom Melchizedek is compared. It is not Christ who is made like to Melchizedek but Melchizedek, who is 'made like unto the Son of God'."⁵⁶

2. The Incarnate Son

It is the pre-existent Son that became the incarnate Son. On entering the world the Son says, "It is a body thou hast pre-

55. Robinson, Theodore, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 17.

56. Milligan, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 75.

a temporary humiliation, which was one of the first steps in the fulfillment of the whole purpose of God for his Son. "This is a part of the total scheme, and without it Jesus could not have completed His work. It does not affect His real and eternal pre-existence, for He is forever crowned with glory and honor, and as soon as the 'little while' is past, He can resume His divine state, and take once more His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high."⁵⁵ There are a few scholars among whom we find Bleek, Kurtz and Westcott, who believe that the author suggests a pre-existent state in his use of the word "heir" in Hebrews 1:2 in reference to the Son as being "appointed heir of all things". Willigen points to a pre-existent state of Christ in the comparison of Christ with Melchizedek in Chapter Seven. "It is noticeable that though in His historical manifestation Christ was long subsequent to Melchizedek, He is brought before us as the original to whom Melchizedek is compared. It is not Christ who is made like to Melchizedek but Melchizedek, who is 'made like unto the Son of God'."⁵⁶

2. The Incarnate Son

It is the pre-existent Son that became the incarnate Son. On entering the world the Son says, "It is a body thou hast pre-

55. Robinson, Theodore, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 17.
56. Willigen, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 75.

pared for me."⁵⁷ During the pre-existent state of Jesus he was comparable to the angels, yet he held a unique relation to God when compared with the spirit-beings. In this state his work was not like that of any other being in its relation to men and to God. He had a special relation to men even in the pre-existent state since "he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2:11).

The author of Hebrews does not dwell on the manner of incarnation. We can conclude how important he believes it from his frequent references, from many different angles, to it. Although the author does not tell us how the Son entered among us, there are those scholars who hold that he intimates a birth and passing from childhood to manhood by his use of "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same" (Hebrews 2:14) This, indeed, seems carrying ideas too far. According to Beyschlag the true humanity of Jesus is recognized more clearly and consciously in Hebrews than in any other New Testament writing.⁵⁸ There is no doubt that the author dwells on the humiliation of the Son and his perfect contact and sympathy with men. The author uses the human name nine times throughout the Epistle, placing it in an emphatic position at the end of the clause. (Hebrews 2:9; 3:1; 6:20; 7:22; 10:19; 12:2; 12:24; 13:12; 13:20) He does not

57. Moffatt, James, The Holy Bible, Hebrews 10:5.

58. Beyschlag, Willibald, New Testament Theology, Vol. II, p. 305.

pared for me." ²⁷ During the pre-existent state of Jesus he was comparable to the angels, yet he held a unique relation to God when compared with the spirit-beings. In this state his work was not like that of any other being in its relation to men and to God. He had a special relation to men even in the pre-existent state since "he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2:11).

The author of Hebrews does not dwell on the manner of incarnation. We can conclude how important he believes it from his frequent references, from many different angles, to it. Although the author does not tell us how the Son entered among us, there are those scholars who hold that he intimates a birth and passing from childhood to manhood by his use of "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same" (Hebrews 2:14). This, indeed, seems carrying ideas too far. According to Beysschlag the true humanity of Jesus is recognized more clearly and consciously

in Hebrews than in any other New Testament writing. ²⁸ There is no doubt that the author dwells on the humiliation of the Son and his perfect contact and sympathy with men. The author uses the human name nine times throughout the Epistle, placing it in an emphatic position at the end of the clause. (Hebrews 2:9; 3:1; 6:20; 7:22; 10:19; 12:2; 12:24; 13:12; 13:20) He does not

27. Moffatt, James, The Holy Bible, Hebrews 10:5.
28. Beysschlag, Willibald, New Testament Theology, Vol. II, p. 305.

use it only for the earthly life of Jesus.

Jesus' humanity was a "representative" humanity. He did not lead an isolated life on earth. He suffered and died because this was the lot of men whom he came to save. Divinity alone does not make the perfect priest; humanity also is necessary. Jesus' spiritual Oneness had to be preceded by physical Oneness. According to the author he was made like his brethren in order that "he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."⁵⁹ It was necessary for Jesus, if he were to be victor and gain victory over the ills that troubled men, to enter into the sphere of the evil and experience the tests and trials of men. "God became incarnate that he might share the nature of those whose spiritual deliverance he was to effect. They were to become his spiritual children and as father and child must be of the same nature, he took the nature which belonged already to the children."⁶⁰ The author gives great prominence to the human character of Jesus, by placing His earthly life in the foreground. There is no concentration on the teachings of Jesus, but instead on the nature of Jesus which makes him the Son of God. We are conscious of the author's conviction that the earthly life is a necessary prelude to heavenly life; that because of human struggle Jesus

is also known of the Resurrection, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus" (Hebrews 13:20);

59. Hebrews 2:17

60. Gould, Ezra P., The Biblical Theology of the New Testament, p. 163.

use it only for the earthly life of Jesus.
Jesus' humanity was a "representative" humanity. He
did not lead an isolated life on earth. He suffered and died
because this was the lot of men whom he came to save. Divinity
alone does not make the perfect priest; humanity also is nec-
essary. Jesus' spiritual Oneness had to be preceded by
physical Oneness. According to the author he was made like his
brethren in order that "he might be a merciful and faithful
high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation
for the sins of the people."⁵⁹ It was necessary for Jesus, if
he were to be victor and gain victory over the ill that
troubled men, to enter into the sphere of the evil and exper-
ience the tests and trials of men. "God became incarnate that
he might share the nature of those whose spiritual deliverance
he was to effect. They were to become his spiritual children
and as father and child must be of the same nature, he took the
nature which belonged already to the children."⁶⁰ The author
gives great prominence to the human character of Jesus, by
placing His earthly life in the foreground. There is no con-
centration on the teachings of Jesus, but instead on the nature
of Jesus which makes him the Son of God. We are conscious of
the author's conviction that the earthly life is a necessary
prelude to heavenly life; that because of human struggle Jesus

59. Hebrews 2:17
60. Gould, Ezra P., The Biblical Theology of the New Testament.
p. 155.

became a fuller, richer Son of God; that because of the trials, opposition, faith and courage of Jesus, he was like his brethren. At several places in the Epistle the author injects a reference to Jesus' earthly life. He seems to know of the tradition that the Messiah would come out of Judah, (Heb. 7:14) though he says nothing of the Davidic descent of our Lord. There is an intimation of knowledge of Jesus' active ministry in "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him" (Hebrews 2:3). This shows the author knew of Jesus as a preacher and of his inner group who later became the source for the words of Jesus. And in 4:15 we find a knowledge of the temptations of Jesus as the author says "tempted like as we". There is also a reference to knowledge of the Passion story in "who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death" (Hebrews 5:7). This also may have been mentioned by the author to show the inner life of Jesus as he gave utterance in the intensity of his personal sufferings during the earthly life. The author knows of the Cross, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame." (Hebrews 12:2) He also knows of the Resurrection, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus" (Hebrews 13:20);

Al. Williams, George, *The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 81.

33

became a fuller, richer Son of God; that because of the trials, opposition, faith and courage of Jesus, he was like his brethren. At several places in the Epistle the author injects a reference to Jesus' earthly life. He seems to know of the tradition that the Messiah would come out of Judah, (Heb. 7:14) though he says nothing of the Davidic descent of our Lord. There is an intimation of knowledge of Jesus' active ministry in "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was continued unto us by them that heard him" (Hebrews 2:3). This shows the author knew of Jesus as a preacher and of his inner group who later became the source for the words of Jesus. And in 4:15 we find a knowledge of the temptations of Jesus as the author says "tempted like as we". There is also a reference to knowledge of the Passion story in "who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death" (Hebrews 5:7). This also may have been mentioned by the author to show the inner life of Jesus as he gave utterance to the intensity of his personal suffering during the earthly life. The author knows of the Cross, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12:2). He also knows of the Resurrection, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus" (Hebrews 13:20);

and of the Ascension, "Who sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3). He also speaks of the sympathy of Jesus as High Priest and of his temptations on earth which better enable him to sympathize with his brethren, "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

Jesus' humanity was a "perfected" humanity as well as a "representative" humanity. It was not a moral but an official perfection; a growth into that state in which alone Jesus "can fully discharge the duties of the High Priestly office, for which He has been designed."⁶¹ This idea of growth illumines the author's conception of Jesus' perfection. Jesus was sinless, but he was not fully qualified for his task until he had experienced the sufferings which placed him in a position to take up his task. It was only through sufferings his perfection was reached; only through such experiences he could lead (by first treading the same path) men to the goal. His perfection in earthly life took place step by step. "He was 'made perfect' and the true nature of His humanity is seen in this, that each stage of His earthly life was intended to fit Him more completely for that state to which it became God to raise Him, and in which He could 'perfect' others through

61. Milligan, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 81.

and of the Ascension, "who . . . sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3). He also speaks of the sympathy of Jesus as High Priest and of his temptations on earth which better enable him to sympathize with his brethren. "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

Jesus' humanity was a "perfected" humanity as well as a "representative" humanity. It was not a mortal but an official perfection; a growth into that state in which alone Jesus "can fully discharge the duties of the High Priestly office, for which He has been designed." ⁶¹ This idea of growth illumines the author's conception of Jesus' perfection. Jesus was sinless, but he was not fully qualified for his task until he had experienced the sufferings which placed him in a position to take up his task. It was only through sufferings his perfection was reached; only through such experiences he could lead (by first treading the same path) men to the goal. His perfection in earthly life took place step by step. "He was 'made perfect' and the true nature of His humanity is seen in this, that each stage of His earthly life was intended to fit Him more completely for that state to which it became led to raise Him, and in which He could 'perfect' others through

61. William, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 81.

fellowship with Himself."⁶² Jesus' earthly life was not "sin-stained" though it was "sin-burdened". His earthly life, as the author of Hebrews points out, was perfectly natural and normal and was a part of his training for his work as High Priest. "Being in all points one with us as to manhood, sin only excepted, He sympathizes with us in every temptation. His understanding more acutely perceived the forms of temptation than we. He experimentally knew what power was needed to overcome. In Him alone is an example suited to men of every character and under all circumstances. In sympathy He adapts Himself to each, as if He had not merely taken man's nature in general, but the peculiar nature of that single individual."⁶³

The author of Hebrews shows in several instances the genuine humanness of Jesus. In filial submission Jesus accepted his sufferings on earth. This showed his perfect obedience which was part of his training for priestly office, of which we have spoken. His humility was shown by the fact that he did not appoint himself High Priest; the glory of being made High Priest was not self-assumed glory. The author points out the loyalty and fidelity of Jesus in the words "who was faithful to him that appointed him"⁶⁴; the piety of Jesus in the phrase "having offered up prayers and supplications"⁶⁵; and

62. Milligan, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 82.

63. Inge, W. R., and Gould, H. L., The Study Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 49.

64. Hebrews 3:2.

65. Hebrews 5:7.

Fellowship with Himself.⁶² Jesus' earthly life was not "sin-
 stained" though it was "sin-burdened". His earthly life, as
 the author of Hebrews points out, was perfectly natural and
 normal and was a part of his training for his work as High
 Priest. "Being in all points one with us as to weakness, sin
 only excepted. He sympathizes with us in every temptation. His
 understanding more acutely perceived the forms of temptation
 than we. He experimentally knew what power was needed to over-
 come. In Him alone is an example suited to men of every
 character and under all circumstances. In sympathy He adapts
 Himself to each, as if He had not merely taken man's nature in
 general, but the peculiar nature of that single individual."⁶³
 The author of Hebrews shows in several instances the ex-
 treme humanness of Jesus. In filial submission Jesus accepted
 his sufferings on earth. This showed his perfect obedience
 which was part of his training for priestly office, of which we
 have spoken. His humility was shown by the fact that he did
 not appoint himself High Priest; the glory of being made
 High Priest was not self-assumed glory. The author points out
 the loyalty and fidelity of Jesus in the words "who was faith-
 ful to him that appointed him"⁶⁴; the glory of Jesus in the
 phrase "having offered up prayers and supplications"; and

62. William, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the

Hebrews, p. 82.

63. Innes, W. R., and Gould, H. L., The Study Bible, The Epistle

to the Hebrews, p. 42.

64. Hebrews 5:7.

65. Hebrews 5:7.

the patient endurance of Jesus for he "endured such contradiction of sinners against himself"⁶⁶. Stevens agrees that "the life of Jesus on earth was genuinely human, but sinless; its progress was not, as in the case of other men, a gradual elimination of evil, but a constantly increasing realization of the good."⁶⁷ The writer of Hebrews emphasizes the sinlessness of Jesus as he says, "For such a high priest became us, who is holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners and made higher than the heavens."⁶⁸ Jesus in his earthly life performed for men a priest's part after which he took his place on the right hand of God. Milligan has said, "The Son in the days of His flesh was the same in His inmost being as the Son in His state of pre-existence: it was only the outward form of His manifestation that was changed. And if the glory of the Divine Sonship was hidden for a time in the lowliness and humiliation of a suffering life, it was only in order that the same glory might shine forth with renewed brightness when He who was crucified in weakness was raised by the power of God."⁶⁹

Forerunner was those who follow him. He is elsewhere called the first, the first-born, the first of the first-born.⁷¹

3. The Exalted Son

The author uses the pre-existent and incarnate Son to introduce the Son exalted. The nomenclature used by the author

66. Hebrews 12: 3

67. Stevens, George, B., The Theology of the New Testament, p. 500.

68. Moffatt, James, The Holy Bible, Hebrews 7:26. *The Epistle*

69. Milligan, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 74.

the patient endurance of Jesus for us "endured such contradiction of sinners against himself."⁶⁶ Stevens agrees that "the life of Jesus on earth was genuinely human, but sinless; its progress was not, as in the case of other men, a gradual elimination of evil, but a constantly increasing realization of the good."⁶⁷ The writer of Hebrews emphasizes the sinlessness of Jesus as he says, "For such a high priest became us, who is holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners and made higher than the heavens."⁶⁸ Jesus in his earthly life performed for men a priest's part after which he took his place on the right hand of God. William has said, "The Son in the days of his flesh was the same in His inmost being as the Son in His state of pre-existence; it was only the outward form of His manifestation that was changed. And if the glory of the Divine Sonship was hidden for a time in the lowliness and humiliation of a suffering life, it was only in order that the same glory might shine forth with renewed brightness when He who was crucified in weakness was raised by the power of God."⁶⁹

3. The Exalted Son

The author uses the pre-existent and incarnate Son to introduce the Son exalted. The nomenclature used by the author

⁶⁶ Hebrews 12: 3
⁶⁷ Stevens, George, B., The Theology of the New Testament, p. 500.
⁶⁸ Moffatt, James, The Holy Bible, Hebrews 7:26.
⁶⁹ William, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 74.

for the exalted state of Jesus is distinctive. The author says, "our Lord hath sprung out of Judah" (Hebrews 7:14). This is the first time "our Lord", which is now so common, was used in the New Testament. One scholar says it "occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only in the Pastoral Epistles (I Timothy 1:14; II Timothy 1:8) and in the Second Epistle of Peter (3:15)."⁷⁰ Bruce says that the words "the Lord" meant for the Hebrew readers, "Christ seated on His heavenly throne". Christ is also referred to as "heir". By this the author implies the exalted state since for him the heir does not gain possession of what has all along awaited him, until he finishes his earthly work and enters the heavenly world. Jesus is termed the "forerunner" which in one respect expresses the difference between the Levitical and Christian religion. It is in this exalted state as forerunner, he enters the sanctuary and gives the people entrance. Israel's high priest did not go inside the Holy of Holies as a forerunner, but a representative of the people. Forerunner is a "very significant word: a forerunner has those who follow him. He is elsewhere called the first, the first-fruits, the first-begotten."⁷¹

In the state of exaltation Jesus is spoken of as "crowned with glory and honor" (Hebrews 2:10), and as sitting "down at

70. Peake, A. S., The Century Bible, Hebrews, p. 158.

71. Inge, W. R. and Gould, H.L., The Study Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 59.

For the exalted state of Jesus is distinctive. The author says, "our Lord hath sprung out of Judah" (Hebrews 7:14). This is the first time "our Lord", which is now so common, was used in the New Testament. One scholar says it "occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only in the Pastoral Epistles (I Timothy 1:14; II Timothy 1:8) and in the Second Epistle of Peter (2:15)." ⁷⁰ Bruce says that the words "the Lord" meant for the Hebrew readers, "Christ seated on His heavenly throne". Christ is also referred to as "heir". By this the author implies the exalted state since for him the heir does not gain possession of what has all along awaited him, until he finishes his earthly work and enters the heavenly world. Jesus is termed the "forerunner" which in one respect expresses the difference between the Levitical and Christian religion. It is in this exalted state as forerunner, he enters the sanctuary and gives the people entrance. Israel's high priest did not go inside the Holy of Holies as a forerunner, but a representative of the people. Forerunner is a "very significant word: a forerunner has those who follow him. He is elsewhere called the first, the first-fruits, the first-born." ⁷¹

In the state of exaltation Jesus is spoken of as "crowned with glory and honor" (Hebrews 2:10), and as sitting "down at

70. Peake, A. B., The Century Bible, Hebrews, p. 158.
 71. Inge, W. R. and Gould, H. D., The Study Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 59.

the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12). It is in this state that Jesus receives his inheritance; in this period his death has been efficacious in bringing his brethren from the fear of death; as the exalted Son he stands before God on behalf of men; and exalted he is mediator and the patron of a better covenant. With regard to this state of Jesus it is difficult to place it clearly as there seem to be events which belong to both earthly and exalted states. One of the writers on Hebrews says there is a "vestibule or entrance" into the exalted state of Christ. In this "vestibule" he places "the great sacrificial act - the voluntary death (7:27); also the resurrection (13:20) and the ascension of Jesus (4:14)."⁷² It is Bruce who holds that "there could not be exaltation subsequent to the humiliation unless there were an exaltation in the humiliation. 'Exalted because of' implies 'exalted in'. One who does not appreciate the latter truth cannot understand the former. The posthumous exaltation must be seen to be but the public recognition of the eternal fact, otherwise belief in it possesses no spiritual value,"⁷³ In his exaltation Jesus dies as priest, enters the heavenly sanctuary and takes his seat on the right hand of the throne. In his glory he proves that he is higher than all the priests that ever had

72. MacNeill, Harris, The Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 33.

73. Bruce, Alexander, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 87.

the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12). It is in this state that Jesus receives his inheritance; in this period his death has been efficacious in bringing his brethren from the fear of death; as the exalted Son he stands before God on behalf of men; and exalted he is mediator and the patron of a better covenant. With regard to this state of Jesus it is difficult to place it clearly as there seem to be events which belong to both earthly and exalted states. One of the writers on Hebrews says there is a "vestibule or entrance" into the exalted state of Christ. In this "vestibule" he passes "the great sacrificial act - the voluntary death (7:27); also the resurrection (13:20) and the ascension of Jesus (4:14)." ⁷² It is Bruce who holds that "there could not be exaltation subsequent to the humiliation unless there were an exaltation in the humiliation. 'Exalted because of' implies 'exalted in'." One who does not appreciate the latter truth cannot understand the former. The posthumous exaltation must be seen to be but the public recognition of the eternal fact, otherwise belief in it possesses no spiritual value. ⁷³ In his exaltation Jesus dies as priest, enters the heavenly sanctuary and takes his seat on the right hand of the throne. In his glory he proves that he is higher than all the priests that ever had

72. Macmillan, Harris, The Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 35.
73. Bruce, Alexander, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 87.

existed; that his offering was sufficient and effectual; that this offering was effectual for all time. So it can be seen that the "three periods, preincarnate, incarnate and post-incarnate, constitute the career of Jesus These are not progressive stages, though they are clearly stages in the career of one and the same person. It is remarkable how little is said that applies to the preincarnate stage. Yet what little is said is of such a high tenor that it forbids the conception that in his real character and nature this person experienced a continuous development from lower to higher or from imperfect to perfect. The writer, indeed dwells much on the 'perfecting' of Jesus through sufferings but this does not involve a continuous progression through three periods. One who was the Son of God, through whom he made the worlds and probably the supporter of those worlds, the effulgence of God's glory and impress of his substance in the preincarnate state, could not be conceived of as progressing through these three stages."⁷⁴ In all three stages of Jesus' career the author of Hebrews never loses sight of the fact that Sonship is the basis of Jesus' Person as well as his work; he regards Sonship as being associated with Christ's pre-existent, earthly and exalted state.,

74. MacNeill, Harris, The Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 35.

existed; that his offering was sufficient and effectual; that
 this offering was effectual for all time. So it can be seen
 that the "three periods, preincarnate, incarnate and post-
 incarnate, constitute the career of Jesus These are
 not progressive stages, though they are clearly stages in the
 career of one and the same person. It is remarkable how little
 is said that applies to the preincarnate stage. Yet what
 little is said is of such a high tenor that it forbids the
 conception that in his real character and nature this person
 experienced a continuous development from lower to higher or
 from imperfect to perfect. The writer, indeed dwells much on
 the 'perfecting' of Jesus through sufferings but this does
 not involve a continuous progression through three periods.
 One who was the Son of God, through whom he made the worlds and
 probably the supporter of those worlds, the effulgence of God's
 glory and image of his substance in the preincarnate state,
 could not be conceived of as progressing through these three
 stages."¹⁴ In all three stages of Jesus' career the author
 of Hebrews never loses sight of the fact that Sonship is the
 basis of Jesus' Person as well as his work; he regards Son-
 ship as being associated with Christ's pre-existent, earthly
 and exalted state.

W. Beane, Hebrews, p. 35.
The Christology of the Epistle to the

By Reason of His Superiority over the Prophets

Jesus' glory is also used in connection with the author's comparison between Jesus and the other agents or mediators in God's revelation to men. The first is a comparison instituted between Jesus and the prophets, who were the human agents of revelation earlier than the hero of the author of Hebrews. The author conveys the idea that these were in the same line with Jesus, forerunners rather than rivals of Jesus; that they did not assume a tone of finality; that they were men preaching of the Messiah and Divine Kingdom to come. It is true, God spoke to the prophets, but our author takes special pains to call our attention to the fact of "God, having of old time by divers portions and in divers manners spoken unto the fathers in the prophets" (Hebrews 1:1). This meant that there were many of these agents of revelation since the author used the plural and that the revelation came in a piece-meal fashion over a period of time and in "many modes". These "many modes" meant "the different methods used by God in communicating His message to the prophets, such as dreams, visions, speech face to face, or the compulsion of inner conviction."⁷⁵ This is shown by the contributions of the Hebrew Bible: the Law given by Moses, the history of Israel given by several chroniclers, the writings of the poets, and the prophecies. With so many

75. Peake, A. S., The New Century Bible, Hebrews, p. 73.

men as speakers for God the sum of the parts cannot be accepted as a complete revelation. It is no wonder that the author of Hebrews when considering the individual differences of the men could not consider such a book the final message of God. It seems that the author had grounds for the inferiority of the revelations of the prophets, especially when we are told that in these last days God "hath spoken unto us by his Son". The author reminds us that God sent one who as a Son could bring the true and final revelation. As a Son he would have insight into the inner thoughts of the Father, and would be able to understand and explain these. From this fact we are forced to conclude that "to this final revelation there can be no further addition complete in itself; it yet works as the leaven and grows as the grain of mustard seed, and brightens and broadens as the Dawn."⁷⁶

By Reason of His Superiority over the Angels

In our times it is very difficult to realize the importance of angels to the Jewish people of Old Testament and early Christian times. Angels played a most important part in the Jewish system of laws, rites and ceremonies. Scientific data have done away with even the "nature" angels to whom the physi-

76. Farrar, F. W., The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews, p. 53.

men as spokesmen for God the son of the Father cannot be regarded as a complete revelation. It is no wonder that the author of Hebrews when considering the individual differences of the men would not consider such a book the final message of God. It seems that the author had grounds for the inferiority of the revelation of the prophets, especially when we are told that in these last days God "has spoken unto us by His Son". The author reminds us that God sent one who as a Son could bring the true and final revelation. As a Son he would have insight into the inner thoughts of the Father, and would be able to understand and explain these. From this fact we are forced to conclude that "to this final revelation there can be no further addition complete in itself; it yet works as the leaven and grows as the grain of mustard seed, and brightens and proceeds as the dawn." 76

My Reason of His Superiority over the Angels

In our time it is very difficult to realize the importance of angels to the Jewish people of Old Testament and early Christian times. Angels played a most important part in the Jewish system of laws, rites and ceremonies. Scientific data have gone away with even the "nature" angels to whom the physical

cal world was given as their charge. The angels were considered God's ministers toward men and acted by his command. They were believed to have been God's agents in the revelation of the law to Moses and Israel and were conceived of as the administrators of the Law as well as its mediators. The angels were believed to have been associated with God in the creation of man. They were held in such high esteem they could not be overlooked by the author of Hebrews. It was necessary for him to show Jesus superior to them. Bruce says, "The high rank assigned to the angels by Jewish theology at the beginning of our era imposed upon the writer of our Epistle the unwelcome necessity of making what appears to us this superfluous assertion of Christ's superiority."⁷⁷

The author of Hebrews gives as reason for the superiority of Jesus over the angels the fact that Jesus "hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (Hebrews 1:4). And he continues "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? and again, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?" (Hebrews 1:5). On no individual angel had God bestowed the distinctive appellation "son". Christ's superiority over the angels is established by this intimate relation and also established by the fact that "When he bringeth in the first-

77. Bruce, Alexander, Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 44.

and world was given as their charge. The angels were con- sidered God's ministers toward men and acted by his command. They were believed to have been God's agents in the revelation of the law to Moses and Israel and were conceived of as the administrators of the law as well as its mediators. The angels were believed to have been associated with God in the creation of man. They were held in such high esteem they could not be overlooked by the author of Hebrews. It was necessary for him to show Jesus superior to them. Bruce says, "The high rank assigned to the angels by Jewish theology at the beginning of our era imposed upon the writer of our Epistle the unwelcome necessity of making what appears to us this superfluous assertion of Christ's superiority."⁷⁷

The author of Hebrews gives as reason for the superiority of Jesus over the angels the fact that Jesus "hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (Hebrews 1:4). And he continues "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? and again, 'I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?' (Hebrews 1:5). On no individual angel had God bestowed the distinctive appellation "son". Christ's superiority over the angels is established by this intimate relation and also established by the fact that "When he bringeth in the first-

⁷⁷ Bruce, Alexander, Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 44.

begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him" (Hebrews 1:6). Likewise, God never called any angel to sit on his "right hand". Christ's position viewed in this case is one of sovereignty while that of the angels is servile. Jesus is for the author of Hebrews what a son is to servants, or a king to his subjects. In Jesus' sovereignty he is to be served by the angels. Another analogy places Jesus as the creator and the angels as his creatures. The angels are to minister and are thus inferior to one who was called by God to share his throne and to have universal dominion. Jesus is superior, as a Son to God, so therefore has a more intimate relationship with God. He also does not have the transient personality of the angels. His existence and reign are founded in eternity. As the Incarnate, Jesus has the angels as his messengers and ministers. As the exalted Son, God would do for him what He would not do for the angels. The author of Hebrews shows admirable skill in establishing the superiority of Jesus over the angels. He has shown by the intimacy, confidence and authority of Jesus, to God, the superiority of the Son Jesus over the angels. By his Sonship and by his very nature Jesus was superior to the angels. He could do what angels could never do, namely, contact men with God; he could remove the barriers that separated God and men; he could open the way to God.

43

descent into the world, he said, and let all the angels of
God worship him" (Hebrews 1:6). Likewise, God never called
any angel to sit on his "right hand". Christ's position viewed
in this case is one of sovereignty while that of the angels
is servile. Jesus is for the author of Hebrews what a son
is to servants, or a king to his subjects. In Jesus,
sovereignty he is to be served by the angels. Another analogy
places Jesus as the creator and the angels as his creatures.
The angels are to minister and are thus inferior to one who was
called by God to share his throne and to have universal domin-
ion. Jesus is superior, as a Son to God, so therefore has a
more intimate relationship with God. He also does not have the
transient personality of the angels. His existence and reign
are founded in eternity. As the Incarnate, Jesus has the
angels as his messengers and ministers. As the exalted Son,
God would do for him what He would not do for the angels. The
author of Hebrews shows admirable skill in establishing the
superiority of Jesus over the angels. He has shown by the in-
timacy, confidence and authority of Jesus, to God, the super-
iority of the Son Jesus over the angels. By his Sonship and
by his very nature Jesus was superior to the angels. He could
do what angels could never do, namely, contact men with God;
he could remove the barriers that separated God and men; he
could open the way to God.

By Reason of His Superiority over Moses and Joshua

After showing Jesus superior to the angels, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews passed on to prove that Jesus was superior to Moses and Joshua. The great Jewish patriarch, Moses, held a position of great glory under the old covenant. His position was altogether unique in the Jewish economy. The Hebrews from long associations and by declaration of the Scriptures held Moses a great apostle, the mediator between God and his people. Moses not only led the people from Egypt, but he was directed by God and was chosen to make the tabernacle after the pattern revealed to him on the mount. All these facts the author of Hebrews bore in mind and gave them their proper mention, so that he would not offend the readers of his Epistle. He places both Moses and Jesus on a par in the quality of faithfulness in their tasks. But by the metaphor of a household personnel he definitely pointed to Jesus' person as being superior to Moses. Sonship again formed the basis of the contrast; "Christ as a son over his own house" (Hebrews 3:6). "Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant" (Hebrews 3:5). How different was the position of son and servant. Both Jesus and Moses were faithful in God's house but the "point of contrast thus lies neither in the degree of faithfulness exercised, nor in the sphere in which it is exercised, but rather in the character of the persons who exercised it, and their consequent attitude towards

After showing Jesus superior to the angels, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews passed on to prove that Jesus was superior to Moses and Joshua. The great Jewish patriarch, Moses, held a position of great glory under the old covenant. His position was altogether unique in the Jewish economy. The Hebrews from long associations and by designation of the Scriptures held Moses a great apostle, the mediator between God and his people. Moses not only led the people from Egypt, but he was directed by God and was chosen to make the tabernacle after the pattern revealed to him on the mount. All these facts the author of Hebrews bore in mind and gave them their proper mention, so that he would not offend the readers of his Epistle. He places both Moses and Jesus on a par in the quality of faithfulness in their tasks. But by the metaphor of a household personnel he definitely pointed to Jesus, person as being superior to Moses. Sonship again formed the basis of the contrast; "Christ as a son over his own house" (Hebrews 3:6). "Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant" (Hebrews 3:5). How different was the position of son and servant. Both Jesus and Moses were faithful in God's house but the "point of contrast thus lies neither in the degree of faithfulness exercised, nor in the sphere in which it is exercised, but rather in the character of the persons who exercised it, and their consequent attitude towards

God's house."⁷⁸ Another comparison is made by the author in which he makes Jesus the builder of God's house, and Moses only a constituent part of the house. This places Jesus as builder of the house and makes Moses of the household. "Christ is builder of the house in a structural sense, and son in the household sense. Moses is built into the house structurally, and is servant in the household."⁷⁹ The founder of any house was greater than any part of the house. The author in making Jesus the builder of the house reflects in him the idea of Creator, and in Moses that which was created. Jesus as Creator was greater than Moses who was created. Thus by a dextrous contrast the author has made Jesus appear immeasurably superior to the greatest of Old Testament characters. "Moses was counted worthy of glory and honor, and had it given him both by God and men; by God as appears from the work He called him to, to deliver His people Israel, to reveal His mind and will to them, and to rule and govern them Christ is worthy of more glory than Moses, and has it given Him by God, angels and men; He is a greater Saviour than Moses; Moses was but a temporal Saviour, but He is the author of spiritual and eternal salvation; He is a greater prophet than Moses, being the only begotten Son of God, who lay in the bosom of the Father, and has declared Him, His mind and will, His gospel,

78. Milligan, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 93.

79. Gould, Ezra, The Biblical Theology of the New Testament, p. 165.

God's house. "78 Another comparison is made by the author in which he makes Jesus the builder of God's house, and Moses only a constituent part of the house. This places Jesus as builder of the house and makes Moses of the household. "Christ is builder of the house in a structural sense, and son in the household sense. Moses is built into the house structurally, and is servant in the household."79 The founder of any house was greater than any part of the house. The author in making Jesus the builder of the house reflects in his the idea of Creator, and in Moses that which was created. Jesus as Creator was greater than Moses who was created. Thus by a deliberate contrast the author has made Jesus appear immeasurably superior to the greatest of Old Testament characters. "Moses was counted worthy of glory and honor, and has it given him both by God and men; by God as appears from the work He called him to, to deliver His people Israel, to reveal His mind and will to them, and to rule and govern them Christ is worthy of more glory than Moses, and has it given him by God, angels and men; He is a greater Saviour than Moses; Moses was but a temporal Saviour, but He is the author of spiritual and eternal salvation; He is a greater prophet than Moses, being the only begotten Son of God, who lay in the bosom of the Father, and has declared Him, His mind and will, His Gospel.

78. Milligan, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 95.
 79. Gould, Ezra, The Biblical Theology of the New Testament, p. 165.

grace and truth as Moses never did"⁸⁰

Jesus was vastly superior as a leader, to Moses and his successor, Joshua. "Moses had not been able to lead the people as a whole into the promised land 'because of unbelief'."⁸¹ Nor had Joshua been any better leader in being able to give them the rest of God; he failed to bring the nation into rest. This quest was, according to the author of Hebrews, still unwon. Jesus, however, was perfectly qualified and perfectly capable to bring men to God's rest. In contrast to Moses and Joshua Jesus was supreme.

By Reason of His Superiority over the Aaronic Priests

Jesus as a high priest was superior to the Aaronic Priests. His priesthood was founded by an oath; his was not a priesthood which passed on from one mortal to another, but was eternal. In his priesthood it was not necessary to offer sacrifice as in the Levitical order. Jesus represented men before God, yet he was unlike the Levitical priest who represented men before God, who "is a man himself - a man, and therefore able to be tolerant of human weakness, weakness which he shares so much that he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for

80. Inge, W. R. and Gould, H. L., The Study Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 42.

81. Willigan, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 94.

grass and truth as Moses never did" 80

Jesus was vastly superior as a leader, to Moses and his successor, Joshua. "Moses had not been able to lead the people as a whole into the promised land 'because of unbelief'." 81 Not had Joshua been any better leader in being able to give them the rest of God; he failed to bring the nation into rest. This quest was, according to the author of Hebrews, still known. Jesus, however, was perfectly qualified and perfectly capable to bring men to God's rest. In contrast to Moses and Joshua Jesus was supreme.

By Reason of His Superiority over the Aaronic Priests

Jesus as a high priest was superior to the Aaronic Priests. His priesthood was founded by an oath; his was not a priesthood which passed on from one mortal to another, but was eternal. In his priesthood it was not necessary to offer sacrifice as in the Levitical order. Jesus represented men before God, yet he was unlike the Levitical priest who represented men before God, who "is a man himself - a man, and therefore able to be fellow-sufferer with those who are weak, and therefore able to be for them as well as for himself." 82

80. Innes, W. R. and Gould, H. L., The Study Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 42.
81. Milligan, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 94.

those of others."⁸² Jesus brought a new covenant. His priesthood not only had a better sacrifice, but was one established under a better covenant and functioning in a better sanctuary.

The author of Hebrews takes delight in showing that the system of the Aaronic priest was subject to death since it was "serving in a sanctuary which was but a copy of the true, offering sacrifices which had to be repeated, its victims material, their deaths involuntary."⁸³ The author never uses the Levitical priesthood "as a symbol or sacrament. It is a starting point, it provides an analogy But except for this convenience in analogy, Christs' priesthood has nothing in common with the Levitical. The Levitical could never develop into His priesthood. What likeness it has to His is merely artificial. If there is death in both, in the one it is a willing act of love, in the other it is inflicted by man upon beasts in a kind of masque or make believe. If blood is offered in both one is the life of the Lord of creation offered by himself, the other offerings are of the blood of beasts, shed without their consent for a kind of fictional connexion with the shedder."⁸⁴

82. Wickham, E. C., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 33.

83. Inge, W. R. and Gould, H. L., The Study Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 89.

84. Nairne, Alexander, The Epistle of Priesthood, p. 140.

those of others." ⁸² Jesus brought a new covenant. His priest-
 hood not only had a better sacrifice, but was one established
 under a better covenant and functioning in a better sanctuary.
 The author of Hebrews takes delight in showing that the
 system of the Aaronic priest was subject to death since it
 was "serving in a sanctuary which was but a copy of the true,
 offering sacrifices which had to be repeated, its victims
 material, their death involuntary." ⁸³ The author never uses
 the Levitical priesthood "as a symbol or sacrament. It is a
 starting point, it provides an analogy But except for
 this convenience in analogy, Christ's priesthood has nothing
 in common with the Levitical. The Levitical could never
 develop into His priesthood. What likeness it has to His is
 merely artificial. If there is death in both, in the one it is
 a willing act of love, in the other it is inflicted by man upon
 beasts in a kind of masquerade or make believe. It blood is
 offered in both one is the life of the Lord of creation offered
 by himself, the other offerings are of the blood of beasts,
 shed without their consent for a kind of fictional connexion
 with the shedder." ⁸⁴

82. Pickman, E. C., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 53.
 83. Inge, W. R. and Gould, R. L., The Study Bible, The Epistle
 to the Hebrews, c. 9.
 84. Walter, Alexander, The Epistle of Priesthood, p. 140.

1. In Ministry of a Better Covenant

It was the claim of the author of Hebrews that the prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled in the coming and ministry of Jesus Christ. This prophecy said, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah".⁸⁵ This prophecy was issued by Jeremiah as comfort to people in a time of trial and dissolution. With this fact in mind we find a subtle usage of it by our author, for the Hebrew Christians were passing through trials. The author makes much of this prophecy. "With keen insight he seizes upon the passage that speaks of a new dispensation in which religion shall be inward and personal, whereby he finds in the Old Testament itself, as he did in the case of Melchizedek, support for his thesis that there is to be a new and better covenant written not on tables of stone but on fleshly tables of the heart and mind."⁸⁶

In the ministry of the better covenant the author concentrates on Jesus, as he is the person by whom the covenant was mediated. Under the former covenant the high priest was in charge, but access to God had been imperfect. The coming of Christ and his entering into the holiest place of God, as a high priest was a change from the old order. Christ brought a

85. Jeremiah 31:33.

86. MacNeill, Harris, The Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 42.

1. In Ministry of a Better Government

It was the claim of the author of Hebrews that the prop-
 hecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled in the coming and ministry of
 Jesus Christ. This prophecy said, "Behold, the days come,
 saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house
 of Israel, and with the house of Judah."⁸⁵ This prophecy was
 issued by Jeremiah as comfort to people in a time of trial and
 dissolution. With this fact in mind we find a subtle message of
 it by our author, for the Hebrew Christians were passing
 through trials. The author makes much of this prophecy. "With
 keen insight he seizes upon the passage that speaks of a new
 dispensation in which religion shall be inward and personal,
 whereby he finds in the Old Testament itself, as he did in
 the case of Melchizedek, support for his thesis that there is
 to be a new and better covenant written not on tables of stone
 but on fleshy tables of the heart and mind."⁸⁶

In the ministry of the better covenant the author con-
 centrates on Jesus, as he is the person by whom the covenant
 was mediated. Under the former covenant the high priest was
 in charge, but access to God had been imperfect. The coming of
 Christ and his entering into the highest place of God, as a
 high priest was a change from the old order. Christ brought a

85. Jeremiah 31:31.
 86. Waddell, Harris, The Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 42.

new and better covenant because of the person and character of himself. The author of Hebrews called "Jesus, High Priest or Mediator of the better covenant, because through his mediation, that is, through the sacrifice of himself which he offered to God, believers received all the blessings of the better covenant."⁸⁷ As the mediator of the new covenant he offered no sacrifice for himself, but only for the people; he did not offer that sacrifice annually but once, for all. The sacrifice itself was not ineffective as were those of the old covenant, but was final and effective for all time. Christ by his sacrifice, swept away the debt collected under the ceremonial rites of the priests of the first covenant, and cleared the conscience of people so that access to God was possible. Weiss says, "Now we understand how this High Priest of the New Covenant could become a Mediator. For there had been a death, which redeemed from the transgressions that were committed under the Old Covenant, that is, from their guilt and from their punishment. Now then those who had been called to receive the promises of the New Covenant, and who yet could not under the first covenant receive these on account of their guilt and punishment, from which this covenant could not release them, these could really secure in the New Covenant the eternal possession promised them, namely the future

87. Clarke's Commentary, Hebrews, p. 738.

new and better covenant because of the nation and character of
itself. The subject of covenant is always, then, a
relation of the people to God, because through his rela-
tion, that is, through the reception of himself which is
offered to God, believers receive all the blessings of the
covenant. As the mediator of the new covenant he
offered to himself for himself, but only for the people; he
did not offer that sacrifice actually but once, for all. His
sacrifice itself was not definitive as regards of the old
covenant, but was final and effective for all time. In view of
his sacrifice, every one who has believed under the new
covenant is the subject of the first covenant, and thereby
the continuance of people as that subject to God was possible.
Now we understand and note the first of the new
covenant could become a relation. For there had been a death
which redeemed from the transgression that were committed
under the old covenant. That is, from their sins and from
their punishment. Now then those who have been called to
receive the promises of the new covenant, and who yet could
not under the first covenant receive these on account of their
guilt and punishment, for what this covenant contained
release for. That is, it really was in the new covenant
the eternal possession of life, namely the future

consummation of salvation."⁸⁸ Christ brought the priestly office to its ideal. Because of this there ensued a closer relation between God and man. Under the New Covenant, Christ is all a priest should be, and the relation between God and man is as it ought to be. "The Old Covenant could not be called 'a will' in an ordinary sense; but the New Covenant was by no remote analogy, the Will and Bequest of Christ."⁸⁹

2. In Ministry of a Better Sanctuary

The author of Hebrews draws a parallelism between the two sanctuaries of the Levitical and Christian ministries, and the work of the Levitical priests and Christ in these sanctuaries. He begins with a detailed description of the tabernacle of the Levitical system. He allows to the full the beauty and the historic dignity of the Mosaic ritual.⁹⁰ He describes how the tabernacle was furnished in its great splendor. Its holiest place was open only to the high priest once a year. This was the "second tent", the part beyond the veil, which was entered into on the Day of Atonement with the blood which was presented to the Lord at the mercy seat. Despite the richness of its equipment and the symbolism, the tabernacle did not establish communion between God and man.

88. Weiss, Bernhard, A Commentary on the New Testament, Vol. IV, p. 189.

89. Inge, W. R. and Gould, H. L., The Study Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 91.

90. Wickham, E. C., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 61.

consummation of salvation. What brought the earthly office to its ideal. Because of this there ensued a closer relation between God and man. Under the New Covenant, Christ in all a priest should be, and the relation between God and man is as it ought to be. "The Old Covenant could not be called 'a will' in an ordinary sense; but the New Covenant was by no remote analogy, the Will and Testament of Christ." 88

2. In Ministry of a Better Sanctuary

The author of Hebrews draws a parallelism between the two sanctuaries of the Levitical and Christian ministries, and the work of the Levitical priests and Christ in these sanctuaries. He begins with a detailed description of the tabernacle of the Levitical system. He allows to the full the beauty and the historic dignity of the Mosaic ritual. He describes how the tabernacle was furnished in its great splendor. Its holiest place was open only to the high priest once a year. This was the "second tent", the part beyond the veil, which was entered into on the Day of Atonement with the blood which was presented to the Lord at the mercy seat. Beside the richness of its equipment and the symbolism, the tabernacle did not accomplish communion between God and man.

88. Walter, Bernhard, A Commentary on the New Testament, Vol. IV, p. 159.
89. Ince, W. R. and Gould, H. L., The Study Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 91.
90. Wickham, E. C., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 61.

But how different was Christ's tabernacle! No candlestick, no golden censer, no ark of the covenant, "no golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded" were there! The author tells us that Christ was "A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man", and that he came to "a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building."⁹¹ It is different for it is "no artificial or artistic product of human skill and toil, fashioned from concrete materials such as wood and stone, and so belonging to the present order of physical creation.. It is a greater and more perfect tent, the heavenly and spiritual pattern of which the earthly and physical Tabernacle and Temple were but faint and imperfect copies."⁹² Christ could not have been a priest on earth "because He could have there no tabernacle in which to offer sacrifice; the only place God had appointed upon earth to sacrifice in, being the Mosaical tabernacle, and the temple, in which no other sacrifice could be offered but those appointed by law; no oblation made, or to be made, but by the Levitical priesthood. Moreover, this tabernacle being the shadow of the heavenly one, that must succeed it as the substance; therefore the oblation to be made by this high priest after

91. Hebrews 8:2; 9:11.

92. Robinson, Theodore, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 125.

But how different was Christ's tabernacle! No candlestick, no golden censor, no ark of the covenant, "no golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded" were there! The author tells us that Christ was "A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man", and that he came to "a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building."⁹¹ It is different for it is "no artificial or artistic product of human skill and toil, fashioned from concrete materials such as wood and stone, and so belonging to the present order of physical creation. It is a greater and more perfect tent, the heavenly and spiritual pattern of which the earthly and physical tabernacle and Temple were but faint and imperfect copies."⁹² Christ could not have been a priest on earth "because He could have there no tabernacle in which to offer sacrifice; the only place God had appointed upon earth to sacrifice in, being the Mosaic tabernacle, and the temple, in which no other sacrifice could be offered but those appointed by law; no oblation made, or to be made, but by the Levitical priesthood. Moreover, this tabernacle being the shadow of the heavenly one, that must succeed it as the substance; therefore the oblation to be made by this high priest after

91. Hebrews 8:2; 9:11.
92. Robinson, Theodore, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 125.

the order of Melchizedek, must be made in the tabernacle which was to succeed and follow this."⁹³ Christ was a servant in the sanctuary in which God dwelt; the priests were servants in earthly sanctuaries. Since the priest worked in an earthly sanctuary with gifts and sacrifices which could not possibly perfect the conscience of the worshippers, they failed to bring their people to the throne of grace. The author used this to show that Christ was a priest working in another, higher sanctuary. "Just as the high priest made his offering at the altar and then carried the sacrificial blood through the veil into the holy place, so Jesus gave himself on the cross, and straightway ascended through the heavens into the presence of God."⁹⁴ And just as the culminating point in the Levitical offering was not met until the presentation of the blood by the high priest in the Holy of Holies, so it was not until Jesus had by his own blood presented himself before the Father that his work in the heavenly sanctuary was perfected. For "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God," (Heb. 9:15) Christ, thus, "has rent the thick veil and opened the way to men to enter into the true holiest place, so that they know God by prayer and communion."⁹⁵ The people were not allowed

93. Inge, W. R., and Gould, H.L., The Study Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 78.

94. Scott, E. F., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 154.

95. Edwards, Thomas C., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 17.

the order of Melchizedek, must be made in the tabernacle which
 was to succeed and follow this.⁹³ Christ was a servant in the
 sanctuary in which God dwelt; the priests were servants in
 earthly sanctuaries. Since the priest worked in an earthly
 sanctuary with gifts and sacrifices which could not possibly
 perfect the conscience of the worshippers, they failed to bring
 their people to the throne of grace. The author used this to
 show that Christ was a priest working in another, higher sanc-
 tuary. "Just as the high priest made his offering at the altar
 and then carried the sacrificial blood through the veil into
 the holy place, so Jesus gave himself on the cross, and
 straightway ascended through the heavens into the presence of
 God."⁹⁴ And just as the culminating point in the Levitical
 offering was not until the presentation of the blood by the
 high priest in the Holy of Holies, so it was not until Jesus
 had by his own blood presented himself before the Father that
 his work in the heavenly sanctuary was perfected. For "now
 such were shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal
 Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your
 conscience from dead works to serve the living God," (Heb. 9:14)
 Christ, Jesus, "has rent the thick veil and opened the way to
 us to enter into the true holiest place, so that they know
 God by prayer and communion."⁹⁵ The people were not allowed

93. Inge, W. R., and Gould, H. L., The Study Bible, The Epistle
to the Hebrews, p. 78.
 94. Scott, E. E., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 154.
 95. Edwards, Thomas C., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 17.

to follow the Levitical high priest into the Holy of Holies. But in the case of Jesus they could. There was no longer a veil shutting off some holy place. No longer did the people wait without the veil - there was unhindered fellowship with God. It is in the true sanctuary, that is, heaven, " that Christ appears in the presence of God for us. It is there, in His person, that there is realized the abiding fellowship of God and man into which the gospel calls us. But this does not mean that His death is not included in His priestly work. The priest's work, his offering, is not consummated until he enters with it (and by means of it) into God's presence; it is then that he is in the full sense a priest. Hence Christ is conceived as exercising His priestly function in the sanctuary above; but He could not be priest there except in virtue of the commission, the preparation, and the offering."⁹⁶

3. In Ministry of a Better Sacrifice

The great comparison made by the author of Hebrews comes in the enumeration of the points of superiority found in the sacrifice of Christ's ministry as compared with the sacrifices offered in the Levitical system. He laid great stress on the Jewish high priest at his greatest glory, when he represented the people on the Day of Atonement as he stood in the

96. Inge, W. R., and Gould, H. L., The Study Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 79.

to follow the Levitical high priest into the Holy of Holies. But in the case of Jesus they could. There was no longer a veil shutting off some holy place. No longer did the people wait without the veil - there was undisturbed fellowship with God. It is in the true sanctuary, that is, heaven, "that Christ appears in the presence of God for us. It is there, in His person, that there is realized the abiding fellowship of God and man into which the gospel calls us. But this does not mean that His death is not included in His priestly work. The priest's work, his offering, is not consummated until he enters with it (and by means of it) into God's presence; it is then that he is in the full sense a priest. Hence Christ is conceived as exercising His priestly function in the sanctuary above; but He could not be priest there except in virtue of the commission, the preparation, and the offering."⁹⁶

3. In Ministry of a Better Sacrifice

The great comparison made by the author of Hebrews comes in the enumeration of the points of superiority found in the sacrifice of Christ's ministry as compared with the sacrifices offered in the Levitical system. He laid great stress on the Jewish high priest at his greatest glory, when he represented the people on the Day of Atonement as he stood in the

⁹⁶ Inge, W. R., and Gould, H. L., The Study Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 79.

presence of God. There were four main points of the Levitical ritual. The blood of the victim was taken into the Holy of Holies by the high priest and sprinkled seven times in the place where Jehovah was supposed to be. "And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat."⁹⁷ The blood was regarded as living. "Not the death of the animal itself, but the life which had been reached through death gave value to the sacrifice. The blood made atonement not by reason of the death 'but by reason of the life'."⁹⁸ By the sprinkling of the blood on the mercy seat the sins of the priesthood and people were covered. The blood atoned. Communion between God and man was restored. The worshippers whom the high priest represented as he stood in the presence of God were reinstated in the covenant. All kinds of sins were included in this atonement. This Levitical rite was carried on once a year. The very fact of annual repetition was an admission of the failure of the act to atone for sins.

97. Leviticus 16:14-15.

98. Milligan, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 136.

presence of God. There were four main points of the Levitical ritual. The blood of the victim was taken into the Holy of Holies by the high priest and sprinkled seven times in the place where Jehovah was supposed to be. "And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat." ⁹⁷ The blood was regarded as living. "Not the death of the animal itself, but the life which had been reached through death gave value to the sacrifice. The blood made atonement not by reason of the death 'but by reason of the life'." ⁹⁸ By the sprinkling of the blood on the mercy seat the sins of the priesthood and people were covered. The blood atoned. Communion between God and man was restored. The worshippers whom the high priest represented as he stood in the presence of God were reinstated in the covenant. All kinds of sins were included in this atonement. This Levitical rite was carried on once a year. The very fact of annual repetition was an admission of the failure of the act to atone for sins.

97. Leviticus 16:14-15.
98. William, George, *The Theology of the Bible to the Hebrews*, p. 136.

In contrast with this Jewish ceremonial we find the offering of the ministry of Jesus. The writer of the Epistle seems to feel that the old order has been seriously broken down by the perfectness of Jesus' ministry. Following the writer's analogy between the duties of Jesus and the Levitical priests on the Day of Atonement, the author brings Jesus on the stage, already a priest "after the order of Melchizedek", ready to enter the place where God is and to present his offering. The Jewish rite affected only ceremonial uncleanness, cleansing the body. Jesus' offering had much more efficacy.

This offering of Jesus was the perfect sacrifice. "The shedding of Christ's blood is the true sacrifice as distinct from the shedding of the blood of bulls and goats, which was only a shadow of sacrifice because it is the manifestation of mind or spirit."⁹⁹ Stevens says, "He has offered not some foreign object, but himself. He shed not the blood of unknowing beasts, but his own blood. He presented to God not some lower creature, but his own spotless and holy life - an offering of inherent value and perpetual validity."¹⁰⁰ Under the law blood was necessary as a medium of atonement. It had a unique efficacy of which our author seemed conscious. He took pains to draw a parallel between the purity of the victim offered under the Law, and the purity of Jesus himself, who was "with-

99. Bruce, Alexander, Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 295.

100. Stevens, George B., The Theology of the New Testament, p. 510.

In contrast with this Jewish ceremonial we find the offering of the ministry of Jesus. The writer of the Epistle seems to feel that the old order has been seriously broken down by the perfectness of Jesus' ministry. Following the writer's analogy between the duties of Jesus and the Levitical priests on the Day of Atonement, the author brings Jesus on the stage, already a priest "after the order of Melchizedek", ready to enter the place where God is and to present his offering. The Jewish rite affected only ceremonial uncleanness, cleansing the body, Jesus' offering had much more efficacy.

This offering of Jesus was the perfect sacrifice. "The shedding of Christ's blood is the true sacrifice as distinct from the shedding of the blood of bulls and goats, which was only a shadow of sacrifice because it is the manifestation of mind or spirit." ⁹⁹ Stevens says, "He has offered not some foreign object, but himself. He shed not the blood of unknown beasts, but his own blood. He presented to God not some lower creature, but his own spotless and holy life - an offering of inherent value and perpetual validity." ¹⁰⁰ Under the law blood was necessary as a medium of atonement. It had a unique efficacy of which our author seemed conscious. He took pains to draw a parallel between the purity of the victim offered under the law, and the purity of Jesus himself, who was "with-

⁹⁹ Bruce, Alexander, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 295.
¹⁰⁰ Stevens, George B., *The Theology of the New Testament*, p. 510.

out spot", who was "Himself as an unblemished sacrifice."¹⁰¹ If the blood of animals conferred ritual cleanness, how much greater would be the result of the blood of Christ! Jesus was a high priest whose holiness was not profaned by guilt. He was separated from the sinner whom he represented since his removal to heaven. It was not necessary for him to interrupt his representation before God for the people, to sacrifice for his own sins, because he was sinless. As Aaron entered the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement with a sacrifice so did Jesus by his death enter the holy place. His death did what the Levitical sacrifices could do only symbolically.

The Jewish rites were performed each year, but in the case of Jesus' sacrificial death there was no need of yearly sacrifice since his was so effectual it need not be repeated. Jesus could not as the case of the high priest who went each year into the Holy of Holies, "have only the purpose of supplementing any possible defect of His self-sacrifice by a constant repetition of this sacrifice."¹⁰² It would have been necessary for him to suffer death repeatedly. The mediator of salvation, as man, could die but once. Because of the ethically perfect spirit of Jesus' offering Himself, the value was eternal not

101. Moffatt, James, The Holy Bible, Hebrews 9:14.

102. Weiss, Bernhard, A Commentary on the New Testament, Vol. IV, p. 191.

out spot", who was "himself as an unblemished sacrifice." 101
If the blood of animals conferred ritual cleanness, how much
greater would be the result of the blood of Christ! Jesus
was a high priest whose holiness was not profaned by guilt.
He was separated from the sinner whom he represented since
his removal to heaven. It was not necessary for him to
interrupt his representation before God for the people, to
sacrifice for his own sins, because he was sinless. As Aaron
entered the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement with a
sacrifice so did Jesus by his death enter the holy place. His
death did what the Levitical sacrifices could do only symboli-
cally.

The Jewish rites were performed each year, but in the case
of Jesus' sacrificial death there was no need of yearly sac-
rifice since his was so effectual it need not be repeated.
Jesus could not be the case of the high priest who went each
year into the Holy of Holies, "have only the purpose of supple-
menting any possible defect of his self-sacrifice by a constant
repetition of this sacrifice." 102 It would have been necessary
for him to suffer death repeatedly. The mediator of salvation,
as man, could die but once. Because of the eternally perfect
spirit of Jesus' offering himself, the value was eternal not

101. Moffett, James, The Holy Bible, Hebrews 9:14.
102. Weiss, Bernhard, A Commentary on the New Testament,
Vol. IV, p. 191.

yearly. The sacrifices of the high priest on the Day of Atonement made it possible for him to enter the Holy of Holies; the self sacrifice of Jesus made it possible for him to enter the Holy of Holies once and for all and to bring eternal redemption. Jesus' offering "had a worth so incalculable that its efficacy endured for ever."¹⁰³ Our author says, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14). By this he knew how "to accomplish a deliverance that was valid for eternity, because the blood which He offered was accepted by God as a ransom, on account of which He declared men free of guilt and punishment."¹⁰⁴

The approach to God was made possible by Jesus. Sin was the obstacle which prevented the people from access to God. He could not enter into communion with those who were unclean. Jesus knew how to sacrifice in order to remove this obstacle. By his sacrifice the believer was placed in the right condition for worshipping God. It was not merely forgiveness of sins which was procured by him for the people. He did not cleanse ceremonially, but really and inwardly. "To the author the death of Jesus has its final significance in bringing to man not merely the comfort of forgiveness, but in actually delivering him from sin, in sanctifying him."¹⁰⁵ The purification

103. Scott, E. F., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 133.

104. Weiss, Bernhard, A Commentary on the New Testament, Vol. IV, p. 187.

105. Beyschlag, Willibald, New Testament Theology, Vol. II, p. 323.

under the Levitical system was merely external. Because of this it was hopelessly inadequate to accomplish a reunion between man and God. By Jesus' continuous presentation before God he was able to accomplish perfect and final salvation for the people. "So long as we think of the death as the offering, we can speak only of the efficacy of the death stretching forward into the future. As soon as we substitute life, the true Biblical idea of offering, for death, the thought of the life offered (the life of one who dieth no more) involves in its own nature the element of continuousness. He who in the earliest stage of His offering presented His life in its deepest, never-ending essence to the Father, must from the very necessity of the case continue to present it in the same character and in the same way for ever. And as His people stand in His life, they are accepted of God, not simply as repeating the fruits of an act long since performed, but coming before the Judge of all in an offering as true and living now as it was two thousand years ago."¹⁰⁶ Jesus' offering brought about a cleansing which removed the guilt of the past and brought the worshippers nearer to God; it brought consecration which attained a fellowship between the worshipper and God, and thus established complete communion; it brought perfection in contrast with the law ("for the law made nothing perfect").

106. Milligan, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 144-145.

under the Levitical system was merely external. Because of this it was hopelessly inadequate to accomplish a reunion between man and God. By Jesus' continuous presentation before God he was able to accomplish perfect and final salvation for the people. "So long as we think of the death as the offering, we can speak only of the efficacy of the death extending farward into the future. As soon as we substitute life, the true Biblical idea of offering, for death, the thought of the life offered (the life of one who died no more) involves in its own nature the element of continuance. He who in the earliest stage of His offering presented His life in its deepest, never-ending essence to the Father, must from the very necessity of the case continue to present it in the same character and in the same way for ever. And as His people stand in His life, they are accepted of God, not simply as repeating the fruits of an act long since performed, but coming before the Judge of all in an offering as true and living now as it was two thousand years ago." Jesus' offering brought about a cleansing which removed the guilt of the past and brought the worshippers nearer to God; it brought connection which attained a fellowship between the worshippers and God, and thus established complete communion; it brought perfection in contrast with the law ("for the law made nothing perfect").

"While the writer interprets the death of Christ on the analogy of the Jewish sacrifices, he is never tired of insisting that it stands on a higher plane, and has now finally accomplished what the old rites could only pre-figure."¹⁰⁷

exceeds the prophets as revelator of God, is superior to the angels who were the mediators of the old covenant, and is more glorious than Moses as the builder of God's true tabernacle, His eternal house: He is a greater Savior than Joshua, for He brings His own to final rest, and He surpasses the Aaronic priesthood, for while they ministered in a 'holy place' made with hands is a 'figure of the true' under a 'Law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of things'. He, 'having once a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for

107. Scott, E. F., The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 132.

"While the writer interprets the death of Christ on the analogy of the Jewish sacrifices, he is never tired of insisting that it stands on a higher plane, and has now finally accomplished what the old rites could only pre-figure." 107

Chapter V

Conclusion

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has revealed to us his conception of Jesus throughout his book. For him Jesus "excels the prophets as revealer of God, is superior to the angels who were the mediators of the old covenant, and is more glorious than Moses as the builder of God's true tabernacle, His eternal house; He is a greater Saviour than Joshua, for He brings his own to final rest, and he supersedes the Aaronic priesthood, for while they ministered in a 'holy place made with hands in a figure of the true' under a 'Law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of things', He, 'having come a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption'!"¹⁰⁸

108. International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Vol, II, article on the Epistle to the Hebrews by T. Rees.

Chapter V

Conclusion

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has revealed to us his conception of Jesus throughout his book. For his Jesus "exceeds the prophets as revealer of God, is superior to the angels who were the mediators of the old covenant, and is more glorious than Moses as the mediator of God's true tabernacle, His eternal house; He is a greater Savior than Joshua, for He brings His own to final rest, and He superseded the Aaronic priesthood, for while they ministered in a 'holy place made with hands in a figure of the true' under a 'law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of things', He, 'having come a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption'.

Chapter VI

Summary

Chapter One

If we could have known the author we would no doubt understand more fully the Epistle which he wrote. It is probable we could find some connection between his personality and the ideas revealed in the book. The converse of this proves true when we attempt to picture the author of Hebrews. We have only the book itself and from its evidence we must gather our few facts concerning the man who wrote it. We believe he was an able scholar with some philosophical knowledge. His style of writing and choice of words reflect his culture and scholarship. As to his name we have no evidence, but many have been the suggestions. Origen's remark "Who wrote the Epistle God only knows certainly", is as true today as when it was uttered. The identity of the readers has been kept from us as successfully as the identity of the writer. Of them we know only what we can deduce from the Epistle. They were a group who could not determine the position of the new faith to the old. They were unaware of what their acceptance of Jesus Christ really meant. Because of this our author writes to them to bring the Christian prerogatives to their minds. There were three things that must have puzzled them for our author takes such pains to cover them. The readers could not understand how a new religion could supersede an ancient, divinely appointed religion. They could not see how the humiliation of Jesus in

the earthly period of his life fitted with the glory of the promised Messiah. They had completely overlooked Jesus as a priest because their ideas of priesthood had been so limited by the Levitical priesthood. When we are conscious of these conditions we can understand the detail and care which the author took to establish his points.

Chapter Two

The presentation of Jesus by the author of Hebrews is in terms of the priesthood. Jesus is the high priest by whom and through whom men are brought near to God. The author builds a contrast between the Levitical priests and his perfect mediator, his perfect priest, Jesus. This priest was of a different priesthood from the familiar Levitical order. He based his claim to priesthood not on physical descent, as did the Levitical priests; parentage did not matter in his order. His priesthood did not pass on to another at his death; he was a priest for ever. His order was eternal. He was a priest "after the order of Melchizedek". The author's appeal to this ancient order mentioned by the Psalmist established Jesus as a priest of this order. Since it was impossible to claim him a priest of the Levitical system because he was of the tribe of Judah, not Levi, a new order was sought. There was nothing inferior about the Melchizedekian Priesthood which the author of Hebrews introduced. It was a royal, righteous, personal

the earthly period of his life filled with the glory of the
promised "Messiah". They had completely overlooked Jesus as a
priest because their ideas of priesthood had been so limited
by the Levitical priesthood. When we are conscious of these
conditions we can understand the detail and care which the
author took to establish his points.

Chapter Two

The presentation of Jesus by the author of Hebrews is in
terms of the priesthood. Jesus is the high priest by whom
and through whom men are brought near to God. The author
builds a contrast between the Levitical priest and his perfect
mediator, his perfect priest, Jesus. This priest was of a
different priesthood from the familiar Levitical order. He
based his claim to priesthood not on physical descent, as did
the Levitical priest; hereditary did not matter in his order.
His priesthood did not pass on to another at his death; he was
a priest for ever. His order was eternal. He was a priest
"after the order of Melchizedek". The author's appeal to this
ancient order mentioned by the Psalmist established Jesus as
a priest of this order. Since it was impossible to claim his
priesthood of the Levitical system because he was of the tribe
of Judah, not Levi, a new order was sought. There was nothing
inferior about the Melchizedekian priesthood which the author
of Hebrews introduced. It was a royal, righteous, personal

and eternal priesthood. Jesus was eligible after this order since parentage or physical descent was not important in it. Jesus had been established as a priest for ever; he was not a transient priest depending on mortal life. Jesus was sworn to be a priest for ever by God's oath. This was the perfect sanction for eternity for Jesus' priesthood. Melchizedek, who typified the Son of God was assimilated by Him. The priesthood established was one which was eternal, founded by oath, immutable and inviolable. Jesus, the perfect priest, 'after the order of Melchizedek', was a priest able to perform a perfect ministry.

Chapter Three

The priesthood of Jesus demanded certain qualifications of its priest. The author of Hebrews shows in detail that Jesus possessed the requirements demanded of the candidate for the priestly office. He had not been self appointed but had been called by God for his priestly office. He was "taken from among" men and had lived as a brother to men. This fitted him as a high priest who was a representative of men before God. Being a brother to men he was able to sympathize with them, and more adequately understood how to help them contact God - the aim of every high priest. Because of Jesus' Sonship he possessed all the qualities necessary for his mediation between God, his Father, and men. Jesus knew how to

and eternal priesthood. Jesus was eligible after this order since parentage or physical descent was not important in it. Jesus had been established as a priest for ever; he was not a transient priest depending on mortal life. Jesus was sworn to be a priest for ever by God's oath. This was the perfect sanction for eternally for Jesus' priesthood. Melchizedek, who typified the Son of God was assimilated by Him. The priesthood established was one which was eternal, founded by oath, immutable and invisible. Jesus, the perfect priest, after the order of Melchizedek, was a priest able to perform a perfect ministry.

Chapter Three

The priesthood of Jesus demanded certain qualifications of its priest. The author of Hebrews shows in detail that Jesus possessed the requirements demanded of the candidate for the priestly office. He had not been self appointed but had been called by God for his priestly office. He was "taken from among" men and had lived as a brother to men. This fitted him as a high priest who was a representative of men before God. Being a brother to men he was able to sympathize with them, and more adequately understood how to help them contact God - the aim of every high priest. Because of Jesus' Sonship he possessed all the qualities necessary for his mediation between God, his Father, and men. Jesus knew how to

remove the obstacles that stood between God and men.

Jesus' training for his priestly office was that technical training that made it possible for him to do the required work as high priest. His Incarnation was necessary to experience that which would place him in perfect sympathy with humanity. He became like his brothers, being tempted, learning obedience and tasting death. In his temptation he was tempted like men, yet unlike them he conquered the conflict and was without sin. Jesus' obedience required the deepest suffering; it came as a result of making his will subservient to God's in every instance, even to death.

Chapter Four

The great concern of the author of Hebrews is to impress the readers of his Epistle with the superiority of Jesus as a high priest. He does this by first pointing to Jesus' Person. He places much weight on the Sonship of Jesus. He reveals his regard for Jesus' position as son by the frequent use of the name "son". He regards the Son as pre-existent, incarnate, and exalted. The Son in the pre-existent state is essentially Divine. Two of the important evidences of this pre-existent state used by the author are in his words "made like unto the Son of God" (Hebrews 7:3) and the mention of the "body" which was prepared for Christ (Hebrews 10:5). We do not know how the author came by this belief, for he merely presents it to

remove the obstacles that stood between God and man.
Jesus' training for his priestly office was that technical
training that made it possible for him to do the required work
as high priest. His incarnation was necessary to experience
that which would place him in perfect sympathy with humanity.
He became like his brethren, being tempted, learning obedience
and tasting death. In his temptation he was tempted like man,
yet unlike them he conquered the conflict and was without sin.
Jesus' obedience required the deepest suffering; it came as a
result of asking his will subservient to God's in every
instance, even to death.

Chapter Four

The great concern of the author of Hebrews is to impress
the readers of his Epistle with the superiority of Jesus as a
high priest. He does this by first pointing to Jesus' Person.
He places much weight on the Sonship of Jesus. He reveals his
regard for Jesus' position as son by the frequent use of the
name "son". He regards the Son as pre-existent, incarnate,
and exalted. The Son in the pre-existent state is essentially
Divine. Two of the important evidences of this pre-existent
state used by the author are in his words "made like unto the
Son of God" (Hebrews 7:3) and the mention of the "body" which
was prepared for Christ (Hebrews 10:5). We do not know how
the author came by this belief, for he merely presents it to

us. And again with the author's view of the Incarnate Son, we do not gain any insight into the manner of Incarnation. Considerable mention is made of the earthly life of Jesus. It can be said the author dwells on Jesus' humiliation, and gives us a clear picture of the true humanity of Jesus - a "real, perfected and representative" humanity. For a little while Jesus gave up his divine state. This was part of God's plan and Jesus' training. Because of Jesus' earthly experiences, his human trials and opposition, he was better trained for the work he had to do as high priest. He was able to sympathize better with men because he, like his brothers, had been tempted. In filial submission Jesus accepted his sufferings on earth. The author points out the loyalty, fidelity, obedience, piety and patience of Jesus during his earthly life, as well as his sinlessness. He declares that Jesus became man to fulfill the purpose declared in heaven and that his earthly life was made continuous with a pre-existing life and was connected with the life which followed it. This state of exaltation which followed gives us the Son Exalted and the mediator of a better covenant. As the Son Exalted, Jesus stands before God on behalf of men; his death has been efficacious, and he is now higher than all priests.

The author shows next that Jesus is greater than the prophets. Here again he features Jesus' Sonship. Would not Jesus as Son be able to reveal the true message of his Father?

us. And again with the author's view of the incarnate God, we do not gain any insight into the manner of incarnation. Considerable mention is made of the earthly life of Jesus. It can be said the author dwells on Jesus' humiliation, and gives us a clear picture of the true humanity of Jesus - a "real, perfected and representative" humanity. For a little while Jesus gave up his divine state. This was part of God's plan and Jesus' training. Because of Jesus' earthly experiences, his human trials and opposition, he was better trained for the work he had to do as high priest. He was able to sympathize better with men because he, like his brothers, had been tempted. In this substitution Jesus accepted his sufferings on earth. The author points out the loyalty, fidelity, obedience, piety and patience of Jesus during his earthly life, as well as his almsgiving. He declares that Jesus became man to fulfill the purpose declared in heaven and that his earthly life was made continuous with a pre-existing life and was connected with the life which followed it. This state of exaltation which followed gives us the Son Exalted and the mediator of a better covenant. As the Son Exalted, Jesus stands before God on behalf of man; his death has been efficacious, and he is now higher than all priests.

The author shows next that Jesus is greater than the prophets. Here again he features Jesus' Sonship. Would not Jesus as Son be able to reveal the true nature of his Father?

God spoke to the prophets in "broken fragments only". Since Jesus was the Son of God he would have insight to the inner thoughts of the Father and would be in a position to bring the final and true revelation. Jesus is also superior to the angels. We are told by the author that he "hath a more excellent name". No angel was ever called "Son"! Jesus also was endowed with greater gifts than the angels; Jesus was eternal, they had transient personalities; Jesus was Son of God, they were servants.

The great Jewish patriarch, Moses, was inferior to Jesus according to the writer of the Epistle. Moses was a servant of the house of God while Jesus was the Son of God. The Son as ruler of the house had greater glory than the best of servants. And Joshua who did not lead the people to final rest, was inferior to Jesus, the perfect mediator, the author of salvation.

Jesus as high priest was superior to the Aaronic priests as well as the prophets, angels, Moses and Joshua. Jesus' priesthood superseded the old Levitical system. His covenant was a new covenant, not like the old a "copy and shadow of heavenly things". In this new covenant there was established by the offering of Jesus, the true covenant relationship between God and man. As Mediator of the New Covenant Jesus brought about all that the Old Covenant had aimed at and failed. There was no place for sin in the New Covenant. Thus

God spoke to the prophets in "broken fragments only". Since
Jesus was the Son of God he would have insight to the inner
thoughts of the Father and would be in a position to bring the
final and true revelation. Jesus is also superior to the
angels. We are told by the author that he "hath a more
excellent name". No angel was ever called "Son"! Jesus also
was endowed with greater gifts than the angels; Jesus was
eternal, they had transient personalities; Jesus was Son of God,
they were servants.

The great Jewish patriarch, Moses, was inferior to Jesus
according to the writer of the Epistle. Moses was a servant
of the house of God while Jesus was the Son of God. The Son
as ruler of the house had greater glory than the best of
servants. And Joshua who did not lead the people to final rest
was inferior to Jesus, the perfect mediator, the author of
salvation.

Jesus as high priest was superior to the Aaronic priests
as well as the prophets, angels, Moses and Joshua. Jesus'
priesthood superseded the old Levitical system. His covenant
was a new covenant, not like the old a "copy and shadow of
heavenly things". In this new covenant there was established
by the offering of Jesus, the true covenant relationship
between God and man. As Mediator of the New Covenant Jesus
brought about all that the Old Covenant had aimed at and
fulfilled. There was no place for sin in the New Covenant. Thus

there could be no separating influence between God and man, as the great obstacle to communion between them was removed. This New Covenant was then final and for ever secured in the full forgiveness of sins.

The author of Hebrews draws for us a parallelism between the sanctuary and the sacrifice of Jesus' ministry and the sanctuary in which the Levitical priests worked and the sacrifices they offered. He describes in detail the places of ministering. What a contrast he makes between the material, man-made tabernacle of the Levitical priests and the true heavenly sanctuary of Jesus! The offering of the Jewish economy was of blood of bullocks which was believed living and believed to atone. The offering of Jesus was not a foreign object but himself. What a contrast in the offering itself! Each year was the Levitical offering given, but Jesus' because of its perfectness was offered once and for all. The Levitical offering produced only outward cleansing, but Jesus' produced inward cleansing. The author conceives of the perfect sacrifice bringing about perfect access to God by all, and bringing about what the rites under the Law could only prefigure. As Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient and effectual, his work was acceptable to God and accordingly the author tells us our high priest was "set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens".

General Summary

In the study of the conception of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews we have found that the author has portrayed Jesus as a glowing figure, as a high priest, who should have appealed greatly to the Hebrew Christians, and received their devotion. There is no doubt that the author believed Jesus the Perfect Mediator between God and man; that he believed it was only with Jesus, the Perfect Priest, that we could come close to God and that it was only through Jesus that we could establish the New Covenant, the true, eternal fellowship with God, our Father.

1. Johannes Friedrich, An Introduction to the New Testament, Vol. II, translated by William W. W. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1881, pp. 42-131.

2. Bruce, Alexander Balmain, Epistle to the Hebrews, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1917, pp. 322-355.

3. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. VII, article on Epistle to the Hebrews by Leopold French, Robert Appleton Co., New York, 1910.

4. Church, Adam, The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Hebrews, Vol. II, Carleton and Porter, New York.

5. Delitzsch, Franz, Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1886, 2 vols.

6. De Ross, William F., High Priesthood and Sacrifice, Longmans, Green and Co., New York, 1905.

7. Hearn, Thomas Charles, The Epistle to the Hebrews, A. C. Armstrong and Son, New York 1880, pp. 1-50, 67-179.

8. Encyclopedia Biblica, Cheyne, T. A. and Black, J. B., Vol. II, Macmillan Co., New York, 1901, article on The Epistle to the Hebrews.

General Summary

In the study of the conception of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews we have found that the author has portrayed Jesus as a glowing figure, as a high priest, who should have appeared greatly to the Hebrew Christians, and received their devotion. There is no doubt that the author believed Jesus the Perfect Mediator between God and man; that he believed it was only with Jesus, the Perfect Priest, that we could come close to God and that it was only through Jesus that we could establish the New Covenant, the true, eternal fellowship with God, our Father.

Bibliography

1. Abingdon Bible Commentary, The Abingdon Press, New York, 1929.
2. Bacon, Benjamin W., An Introduction to the New Testament, Macmillan Co., New York, 1902, pp.140-149.
3. Barnes, Albert, Epistle to the Hebrews, Harper and Brothers, New York 1868.
4. Beyschlag, Willibald, New Testament Theology, Vol. II, second English edition translated by Neil Buchanan, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1899, pp. 282-332.
5. The Holy Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, Authorized King James Version, William Collins Sons and Co., Glasgow, 1928.
6. Bleek, Johannes Friedrich, An Introduction to the New Testament, Vol. II, translated by William Urwick, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1883, pp. 92-130.
7. Bruce, Alexander Balmain, Epistle to the Hebrews, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1911, pp. 422-455.
8. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. VII, article on Epistle to the Hebrews by Leopold Fronck, Robert Appleton Co., New York, 1910.
9. Clarke, Adam, The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Hebrews, Vol. II, Carlton and Porter, New York.
10. Delitzsch, Franz, Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1868, 2 vols.
11. Du Bose, William P., High Priesthood and Sacrifice, Longmans, Green and Co., New York, 1908.
12. Edwards, Thomas Charles, The Expositor's Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, A. C. Armstrong and Son, New York, 1888, pp. 1-50, 69-179.
13. Encyclopedia Biblica, Cheyne, T. K. and Black, J.S., Vol.II, Macmillan Co., New York, 1901, article on The Epistle to the Hebrews.

Bibliography

1. Abingdon Bible Commentary, The Abingdon Press, New York, 1939.
2. Bacon, Benjamin W., An Introduction to the New Testament, Macmillan Co., New York, 1902, pp. 140-149.
3. Barnes, Albert, Epistle to the Hebrews, Harper and Brothers, New York 1893.
4. Baym, William, New Testament Theology, Vol. II, second English edition translated by Neil Buchanan, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1939, pp. 282-332.
5. The Holy Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, Authorized King James Version, William Collins Sons and Co., Glasgow, 1928.
6. Black, Johannes Friedrich, An Introduction to the New Testament, Vol. II, translated by William Urwick, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1887, pp. 92-130.
7. Bruce, Alexander Balmain, Epistle to the Hebrews, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1911, pp. 422-452.
8. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. VII, article on Epistle to the Hebrews by Leopold Fronck, Robert Appleton Co., New York, 1910.
9. Clarke, Adam, The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Hebrews, Vol. II, Carlton and Lister, New York.
10. Delissch, Franz, Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1863, 2 vols.
11. De Boer, William F., High Priesthood and Sacrifice, Longmans, Green and Co., New York, 1908.
12. Edwards, Thomas Charles, The Evangelist's Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, A. G. Armstrong and Son, New York, 1888, pp. 1-50, 69-179.
13. Encyclopedia Biblica, Cheyne, T. K. and Black, J. S., Vol. II, Macmillan Co., New York, 1901, article on The Epistle to the Hebrews.

14. The Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XIII, 13th edition,
article on The Epistle to the Hebrews by
James V. Bartlet, The Encyclopaedia Britannica
Co., 1910.
15. Farrar, F. W., The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Col-
leges, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the
Hebrews at the University Press, Cambridge, 1888.
16. Goodspeed, Edgar J., The Bible for Home and School, The
Epistle to the Hebrews, Macmillan Co., New
York, 1908, pp. 1-29; 53-96.
17. Gould, Ezra, The Biblical Theology of the New Testament,
Macmillan Co., New York, 1900, pp. 160-174.
18. Hastings, James, Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. II,
article on The Epistle to the Hebrews, by
A. B. Bruce and article on Priests in New
Testament by J. Denny, Charles Scribner's Sons,
New York, 1899.
19. Inge, W.R. and Gould, H.L., The Study Bible, The Epistle
to the Hebrews, Doubleday, Doran and Co.,
Garden City, New York.
20. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. II,
article on The Epistle to the Hebrews by T. Rees,
and articles on Priesthood by Wm. G. Moorehead
and David Foster Estes, Howard-Severance Co.,
Chicago, 1915.
21. Lowrie, Samuel T., An Explanation of the Epistle to the
Hebrews, Robert Carter and Brothers, New York,
1884.
22. MacNeill, Harris L., The Christology of the Epistle to the
Hebrews, University of Chicago Press, Chicago,
1914.
23. Mathews, Shailer, The Messianic Hope in the New Testament,
University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1905
(The decennial Publications, Second Series
Vol. XII) pp. 236-243.
24. McGiffert, Arthur Cushman, A History of Christianity in
the Apostolic Age, Charles Scribner's Sons,
New York, 1923, pp. 463-482.
25. Milligan, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the
Hebrews, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1899.

14. The Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. XIII, 15th edition, article on The Epistle to the Hebrews by James V. Bartlett, The Encyclopedia Britannica Co., 1910.
15. Farrar, F. W., The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews at the University Press, Cambridge, 1888.
16. Goodspeed, Edgar J., The Bible for Home and School, The Epistle to the Hebrews, Macmillan Co., New York, 1908, pp. 1-29; 55-96.
17. Gould, Ezra, The Biblical Theology of the New Testament, Macmillan Co., New York, 1900, pp. 160-171.
18. Hastings, James, Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. II, article on The Epistle to the Hebrews, by A. B. Bruce and article on Proteus in New Testament by J. Denney, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1895.
19. Inge, W. R. and Gould, H. L., The Study Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, Doubleday, Doran and Co., Garden City, New York.
20. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. II, article on The Epistle to the Hebrews by T. R. S. and article on Priesthood by Wm. G. Moorhead and David Foster Estlin, Howard-Severance Co., Chicago, 1915.
21. Howrie, Samuel T., An Explanation of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Robert Carter and Brothers, New York, 1884.
22. MacNeill, Harry I., The Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1914.
23. Mathews, Estlin, The Messianic Hope in the New Testament, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1905 (The Decennial Publications, Second Series Vol. XII) pp. 236-243.
24. McGiffert, Arthur Cushman, A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1923, pp. 463-482.
25. Milligan, George, The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1895.

26. Moffatt, James, An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1911, pp. 422-455.
27. Moffatt, James, The Holy Bible: A New Translation, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1935.
28. Moffatt, James, The International Critical Commentary, Epistle to the Hebrews, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1924.
29. Nairne, Alexander, The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, The Epistle to the Hebrews, At the University Press, Cambridge, 1921.
30. Nairne, Alexander, The Epistle of Priesthood, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1913.
31. Narborough, F. D. V., The Clarendon Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, At the Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1930.
32. Peake, A. S., The Century Bible, Hebrews, T.C. and E.C. Jack, Edinburgh.
33. Rendall, Frederic, The Epistle to the Hebrews, Macmillan Co., London, 1883.
34. Robinson, Theodore, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, The Epistle to the Hebrews, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1933.
35. Scott, Ernest F., The Epistle to the Hebrews, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1922.
36. Scott, Ernest F., Literature of the New Testament, Columbia University Press, New York, 1932, pp. 198-209.
37. Stevens, George Barker, The Theology of the New Testament, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1899, pp. 483-523.
38. Tholuck, A., A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1868, 2 vols.
39. Weiss, Bernhard, A Commentary on the New Testament, Vol. IV, translated by George Schodde and E. Wilson, Funk and Wagnalls Co., New York, 1906.

26. Mollat, James, An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1911, pp. 422-455.
27. Mollat, James, The Holy Bible: A New Translation, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1935.
28. Mollat, James, The International Critical Commentary: Epistle to the Hebrews, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1934.
29. Cairns, Alexander, The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges: The Epistle to the Hebrews, At the University Press, Cambridge, 1931.
30. Cairns, Alexander, The Epistle of Philisthood, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1917.
31. Wapbrough, F. D. V., The Cambridge Bible: The Epistle to the Hebrews, At the Cambridge Press, Oxford, 1930.
32. Parker, A. B., The Century Bible: Hebrews, T. C. and E. C. Jack, Edinburgh.
33. Rendall, Frederic, The Epistle to the Hebrews, Macmillan Co., London, 1885.
34. Robinson, Theodore, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary: The Epistle to the Hebrews, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1937.
35. Scott, Ernest F., The Epistle to the Hebrews, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1932.
36. Scott, Ernest F., Literature of the New Testament, Columbia University Press, New York, 1935, pp. 198-209.
37. Stevens, George Barker, The Theology of the New Testament, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1939, pp. 485-525.
38. Tholuck, A., A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1868, 2 vols.
39. Weiss, Bernhard, A Commentary on the New Testament, Vol. IV, translated by George Schoeds and E. Wilson, Funk and Wagnalls Co., New York, 1905.

40. Westcott, Brooke, The Epistle to the Hebrews, second edition, Macmillan Co., London, 1892.
41. Wickham, E. C., Westminster Commentaries, The Epistle to the Hebrews, Edwin S. Gorham, New York.

- 40. Westcott, Brooke, The Epistle to the Hebrews, second edition, Macmillan Co., London, 1892.
- 41. Wickham, E. C., Westminster Commentaries, The Epistle to the Hebrews, Edwin S. Gorham, New York.

BOSTON UNIVERSITY



1 1719 02557 4122

